

The Nation

November 5, 1990 \$1.75 U.S./\$2.25 Can

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EDITORIAL

WE LOVE BIG BROTHER

Apparently, the Senate found it easier to vote funds for obscenities like B-2 bombers than to renew the National Endowment for the Arts without the notorious obscenity pledge. Maybe it's time for artists to try a different approach.

Writing in *The Washington Post* recently, Daniel Greenberg suggested that artists become as flexible (or unprincipled) as many scientists are in securing federal funding. He points out that when scientists in academe faced a conflict between the principle of open inquiry and the Pentagon's demands for secrecy, they simply "adopted the fiction of off-campus laboratories working on classified projects."

Greenberg doesn't say specifically how artists could use these tactics, so we'll offer some suggestions. A familiar ploy among medical researchers is to cry imminent disaster, no matter how many billions they've been getting. Regional theaters could call themselves "laboratories" and say that promising experimental productions will go dark unless they receive an infusion of a few hundred million. Museums could use the old Sputnik ploy (i.e., the Russians are ahead of us so we need billions for scientific education). Translated into post-cold war terms, this would mean warning that the Japanese are ahead in the race to buy up the world's remaining great art.

Artists and writers should tie their work to national defense. Painters could form a C.A.I. (Central Art Intelligence) to monitor the latest avant-garde techniques overseas. Karen Finley could smear oil on her body to dramatize what we're defending in Saudi Arabia. Novels with explicit sex scenes could be classified top-secret to

avoid obscenity problems. This would also guarantee bestsellerdom. As the Mossad books prove, secrecy—not sex—is what sells nowadays.

**PEACE AND
THE P.L.O.
Yehoshafat
Harkabi**

**PAT AND ABE
Eric Alterman**

**HOLY ALLIANCE
Daniel Singer**

**CENSORING
GAYS
Gara LaMarche
William B.
Rubenstein**

**PRIMITIVES
UNTER ALLES
Micaela
di Leonardo**

**BAD GUYS
Stuart Klawans**

KUWAIT BEFORE—AND AFTER?

WHAT THE DEMOCRATIC FORCES WANT

VIRGINIA N. SHERRY

When President Bush announced the deployment of American troops to Saudi Arabia last August, he committed the United States to the restoration of "Kuwait's legitimate government." But what that means is yet to be debated and clarified. At the beginning of September, Representative Lee Hamilton, chair of the Middle East subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said, "I personally would not want to make it one of the United States' objectives that we restore the al-Sabah family." But a few days later the Emir of Kuwait, Sheik Jaber al-Ahmed al-Sabah, told Secretary of State James Baker that his exiled government would provide \$5 billion in financial support for Operation Desert Shield "in order to restore my country to what it was before." Many observers and would-be mediators, including French President François Mitterrand, have proposed or hinted that democratic elections be held in Kuwait if and when Iraq withdraws, but the Bush Administration has remained silent on the subject.

Silence has not, however, been on the agenda of members of Kuwait's home-grown democracy movement. In mid-October, a broad spectrum of 1,200 exiled Kuwaiti notables gathered in Jidda, Saudi Arabia, for a three-day, by-invitation-only conference called by the Kuwaiti ruling family. Billed as the first Popular Kuwaiti Congress, the event was viewed by some observers as an opportunity for the Sabahs

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EXCHANGE.

FASCISTS IN PALESTINE . . .

Detroit

Joost R. Hiltermann asks us to understand the Palestinian definition of collaborators as "those who work for the enemy against their own people, and have therefore forfeited their right to membership in the . . . community." And, as he explains elsewhere, this means their right to live ["The Enemy Inside the *Intifada*," Sept. 10].

Hiltermann should recall Mussolini's definition of fascism as "the people bound together to form a weapon." The essential binding of the fascist weapon, then and now, is the liquidation of any voice that dissents from the state's choice of enemy. But under the arrangements Hiltermann defends, any Arab who begins to think that Israel is not the enemy, and to act on this opinion, is a collaborator and liable to liquidation. I conclude that Hiltermann wants us to be sympathetic with the defining feature of fascism. Is that what he really intends? *W.M. McClain*

. . . AND SAVAGES

Philadelphia

Joost R. Hiltermann contends that the murders of Palestinian "collaborators" by Palestinian hit squads are justified, even if on occasion there are what he calls "excesses."

Yet the only "excesses" that Hiltermann chose to mention were a case in which a "small-time collaborator" died at the hands of "activists" who "had not intended to kill him" and a case in which a member of a Palestinian "strike force" was punished by his colleagues for molesting a woman who had been falsely accused of collaboration. Hiltermann thereby left the erroneous impression that the few unjustified assaults on Palestinians by Palestinians are either accidental, or involve punishment of the perpetrators. There is, however, considerable evidence that a significant number of the hundreds of murdered Palestinian "collaborators" were actually slain for altogether different reasons and posthumously labeled "collaborators" as a cover.

In January, Issa Shina of Khan Yunis was stabbed and seriously wounded by eight masked men who accused her of "immorality," and Jumaa al-Madani, of Absan, was stabbed by six masked men who accused him of "sexual depravity" because he was seen in the company of a widow. In March, Fatima Abu-Najeh, of Gaza, was hacked to death because she was a prostitute. In April, Imad Sikali was strangled in the Ketziot prison camp as a result of a sexual dispute with fellow prisoners. Numerous other victims who were denounced as collaborators were in fact targeted as a result of clan disputes, the settling of scores by underworld figures, personal grudges, petty crime or attempts by Muslim fanatics to impose medieval standards of morality.

The murders have become so uncontrollable that the *intifada* leadership itself has repeatedly been forced to acknowledge that some of the victims are not collaborators. A gang of ax-wielding Arabs hacked to death Ma'mun al-Masri, a teenager, last December because he resembled a suspected collaborator; after the error became apparent, the Unified Leadership of the Uprising declared al-Masri to be a "martyr of the revolution." Ahmed Anturi, 26, was bludgeoned to death in Kalkilya in July by masked men who labeled him a collaborator; the Uprising Leadership subsequently issued a leaflet criticizing the executioners for murdering "a respectable citizen." In view of such savage behavior, is it any wonder that most Israelis fear the consequences of a Palestinian state in their backyard?

Bertram Korn Jr.

Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America

HILTERMANN REPLIES

Ramallah, West Bank

Had W.M. McClain not permitted his emotions to blur his critical faculties, he would have understood from my article that collaborators who forfeit their right to membership in their communities are no longer welcome in those communities; they are expelled, usually after repeated warnings. That's why one can find large colonies of burnt agents in Israel these days. Many of those who have been killed were armed and used their weapons to terrorize the civilian population on behalf of their handlers in the Israeli internal intelligence service, the Shin Bet.

I was intrigued by what McClain may have meant with the phrase "and to act on this opinion." Does that include arresting, interrogating, beating and firing on unarmed civilians, as it invariably does? A person similarly acting on his "opinion" in the United States would soon be behind bars. Unfortunately (or perhaps I should say fortunately), Palestinians do not have such facilities in the occupied territories. By his logic, would McClain label Jewish resistance fighters in the Warsaw ghetto "fascists"?

Bertram Korn says, based on "considerable evidence," that the excesses I referred to in the killing of collaborators are not aberrations. He lists several examples without, however, breaking any new ground, and without presenting evidence, or stating his sources. What is Korn's source? It turns out to be *The Jerusalem Post*, from which he quotes without attribution. Moreover, Korn tampers with the skimpy and unreliable references to collaborator killings in the *Post*. In the Sikali case, for example, the *Post* states, "Military sources said the victim . . . had been slain in a 'sexual dispute,' but Palestinians said he had cooperated with prison authorities" (my emphasis). Korn conveniently suppresses the Palestinian side of the story. He likewise

omits relevant information in the case of Fatima Abu-Najeh. According to the *Post*: "Abu-Najeh was accused of prostitution, and transmitting information obtained from her clients to the security services."

In the Kalkilya case, Korn assumes that nationalists killed Anturi because the Unified Leadership condemned the deed. But the killing has not been claimed by anyone (unlike collaborator killings, which are invariably claimed by some faction or other) and was expressly disclaimed by Al Fatah. It is not clear who the culprits are; the military authorities appear uninterested in pursuing the matter (again unlike occasions when a collaborator is killed by the resistance). Finally, there is no evidence at all that the killers labeled Anturi a collaborator; they left neither an explanatory note nor their calling card. It would not surprise me, from the looks of it, if it were a case of *agents provocateurs* attempting to sow discord in Kalkilya, a common practice in the occupied territories.

Korn's patronizing suggestion that Palestinians' "savage behavior" helps explain the fears of most Israelis about a Palestinian state "in their backyard" is particularly repugnant. Once Palestinians assert their right to independence and establish their own state, it will be as Israel's neighbor, not its backyard. There won't be a need for "savage behavior" at that point because, absent the military occupation, there will be no collaborators. Palestinians will have a state apparatus equipped to deal with conflicts that may arise. In the current situation the Israeli authorities aid crime and collaboration while ignoring the murder of Palestinians by Israeli agents.

Finally, I take issue with Korn's contention that I justify the killing of collaborators. For moral and political reasons I am opposed to the killing of human beings in any context, although I can understand why collaborators are killed in the occupied territories. I speak from the sanctity of my office, however. I am not altogether sure what I would do if I were a Palestinian struggling to free my country from a brutal military occupation and a relative or friend of Amer Amro (16, from Dura), who was shot dead by a collaborator last April as he and his friends set up a barricade at the entrance to their village. That was reported in *The Jerusalem Post* and therefore, of course, acceptable to Korn and his organization.

Joost R. Hiltermann

N.B.

For his article "Feinstein in California: The Center Isn't Holding" [Oct. 22] Danny Goldberg is identified as a founder of Show Coalition and chair of the A.C.L.U. Foundation of Southern California. Neither of those organizations endorses candidates. His analysis and opinions are his own.

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EDITORIALS.

Lenny's Life

For Leonard Bernstein, like Canetti, music was "the measure of mankind." On the podium, at the keyboard, before blank staves, notes poured out of him as if his life depended on them, producing a primal geyser that drenched the world in glorious sound. Perhaps more than anyone of his time, he represented the unbridled possibilities of art in a democracy, the cultural excitement that freedom allows. He was uniquely ours, a kid from Boston who in 1943, at 25, stepped in for the quintessentially European Bruno Walter to lead the New York Philharmonic in an electrifying performance; who at 40

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The Nation (ISSN 0027-8378) is published weekly (except for the first week in January, and biweekly in July and August) by The Nation Company, Inc. © 1990 in the U.S.A. by The Nation Company, Inc., 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011. (212) 242-8400. *Washington Bureau*: Suite 308, 110 Maryland Avenue N.E., Washington, DC 20002. (202) 546-2239. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. International Telex: 667 155 NATION. Subscription orders, changes of address and all subscription inquiries: *The Nation*, P.O. Box 10763, Des Moines IA 50340-0763. *Subscription Price*: 1 year, \$44; 2 years, \$75. Add \$14 for surface mail postage outside U.S. Missed issues must be claimed within 60 days (120 days foreign) of publication date. **Please allow 4-6 weeks for receipt of your first issue and for all subscription transactions.** Back issues \$3 prepaid (\$4 foreign) from: *The Nation*, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011. *The Nation* is available on microfilm from: University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Nation*, P.O. Box 10763, Des Moines IA 50340-0763. This issue went to press on October 18.

became that orchestra's first American music director; who, without forsaking Beethoven and while reviving Mahler, championed Aaron Copland, Charles Ives and other neglected American composers—all the while bestowing on us his own symphonies, ballets, operas, film scores and the thrilling Broadway rhythms and syncopations of *West Side Story*.

He was our teacher too. But he was not, like so many who came before him, a remote pedagogue determined to preserve "classical" music's high status. In his television specials and young people's concerts, he lured us onto the stage with him, and instantly it was as if we were in his living room and he was patting the piano bench saying, "Come on, sit down next to me, and I'll show you something incredible." And he did, lucidly explaining the coda in a Brahms symphony, or a

Mozart cadenza, or a Gershwin jazz riff, holding us with his every word until, miraculously, we actually began to understand how music worked and what made it so beautiful.

Bernstein had, in the words of one veteran New York Philharmonic player, "the modesty of all truly talented people." Unlike austere maestros of the past, he was generous with his time and talent, teaching and inspiring a generation of conductors, like Michael Tilson Thomas and Seiji Ozawa. There is now much handwringing over how the Philharmonic and other orchestras Bernstein was scheduled to conduct will find "name" replacements. But why not give a chance to young unknowns? It is hard to imagine a more fitting tribute than to have those concerts led by talented but unheralded American conductors, as Bernstein himself was that November 14 forty-seven years ago.

In 1970, Bernstein hosted a party for the Black Panthers, after which Tom Wolfe savaged him and others present for indulging in "radical chic." But Bernstein, a lifelong liberal, Democrat and Nation Associate, rightly maintained that celebrity should be put in the service of causes and candidates.

But he was just as able to reject the blandishments of power. Last year he declined a medal from the Bush Administration to protest censorship of an AIDS exhibit by the National Endowment for the Arts. He was dedicated to the fight against AIDS, and only days before his death of a heart attack on October 14 was still hoping at least to make an appearance at the October 28 Carnegie Hall "Music for Life" benefit for the Gay Men's Health Crisis. He was to have shared the conducting with Metropolitan Opera music director James Levine, who will include a tribute to Bernstein in the program. "I heard so many great performances from him," Levine said. "I can't get used to the idea of that stopping."

Neither can we. Leonard Bernstein embodied Kurt Weill's view that the difference between "serious" music and "light" music is spurious, that there is only good music and bad music. This musical democracy annoyed his critics and even some of his admirers. They wanted "their" Lenny to stay on the podium where he belonged, or to stick to composing symphonies and not waste his talents on show tunes, or to skip the highbrow stuff and get back to his real forte, Broadway musicals. But Bernstein would have none of it; he was driven by his prodigious energy and gifts to give us everything he had. We imagine him at the end, taking a last sip of Scotch and a final drag on his cigarette and singing, with a wink and all the exuberance of the brassy lady cab-driver in *On the Town*, "And I can cook too." He surely could.

S&L SHELL GAME

Fifty-seven billion dollars in eight minutes? That's how long it took the Senate Banking Committee to approve, on October 12, the Administration's request for additional funding for the savings and loan bailout. Not a word on this move appeared in *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*. For the whole S&L story, stay tuned for Robert Sherrill's upcoming report.

Shun the P.L.O.?

Jerusalem

Jewish doves in Israel and the United States have rightly criticized the Palestine Liberation Organization for its expression of support for Saddam Hussein. But some well-known Israeli and American Jewish peace advocates have gone further, using those statements to justify ostracizing the P.L.O., presenting its support for Iraq as proof that its recognition of Israel's right to exist and its acceptance of the two-state solution are a sham.

For example, in mid-August, Yossi Sarid, a leading left-wing member of the Knesset, denounced Yasir Arafat and West Bank Palestinian leader Faisal Husseini for expressing sympathy for Saddam, saying they had "put a knife in the back of the peace process." Sarid added that he was no longer convinced of the need for dialogue with the Palestinians. "They can now look for me," he said. Menachem Rosensaft, president of the Labor Zionist Alliance and one of five American Jews who met with Arafat in Stockholm in December 1988, went even further. In a September 9 Op-Ed piece in the *Los Angeles Times*, he asserted that Arafat's desire for peace with Israel was a fraud and that "the PLO cannot play a credible role in the diplomatic arena when it aligns itself with a regime dedicated to the destruction of Israel."

With such statements, those moderates unwittingly support the Israeli government's desire to postpone any initiative aimed at a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This substantiates my old suspicion that many Israeli and American doves are not motivated by a serious analysis of the Middle East situation. Theirs is a frivolous kind of moderation; dovishness as chic. They cannot see the conflict as a two-sided one in which the positions of the adversaries are interactive and interdependent. They do not want to understand that once the Palestinians made a historic change in their position, parrying the scorching criticism of their hard-liners during many hours of arduous internal debate, they expected that their act would not be lightly spurned.

Arab and Palestinian moderation is dependent to a very large extent on Israel. Anwar Sadat did not come to Jerusalem on his own; he went only after he had been led to believe that he would be rewarded by getting back Sinai. Why should the Palestinians moderate their positions if they are incessantly told they will get nothing, or only autonomy frozen under Israeli aegis? What incentive does Israel offer the Palestinians to moderate their positions?

The Palestinian hard-liners' main contention is that the P.L.O. offer—relinquishing its claim to all of Palestine and agreeing to a state in only one-quarter of the territory—will be continually rejected by Israel. Indeed, they see Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's understanding of "peace" to mean Arab acceptance of Israeli domination of the occupied territories. Consequently, they argue, the Arabs and the Palestinians have no alternative but to give up any possibility of compromise and to struggle to the bitter end. They call for propagating this view to all Arab masses to prepare for an eventual Pan-Arab war against Israel. Sarid and Rosensaft should

ask themselves, as they condemn dialogue and limit their criticism to only the Palestinian side, Is it in the interest of peace that such a mood should take hold of the Arab world?

The P.L.O. leaders have never been the princes of my dreams. But thus far the Palestinians consider them to be their representatives in any negotiations. No Arab state and no Palestinian group will present Israel with lesser demands than the P.L.O.'s for a Palestinian state. Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria may now be enraged with the P.L.O. for its support of Iraq, but once the crisis is over, they will renew the relationship. The Palestinians will not disappear, and it is with them that Israel has to negotiate and live.

Until now, the United States has dealt with the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in a laggardly fashion, perhaps because of internal political considerations. But as the recent American actions in the United Nations Security Council show, that attitude is beginning to change. However the Kuwait crisis is resolved, by war or by diplomacy, there will be increased pressure on the Israelis to begin negotiations. Had Israel come to the table long ago and of its own free will, it might have won better conditions than it will negotiating under duress and in the worst of circumstances. Such a denouement will be the legacy of Israel's hard-liners.

YEHOSHAFAT HARKABI

Yehoshafat Harkabi is former chief of military intelligence of the Israeli armed forces and the author most recently of Israel's Fateful Hour. He teaches international relations and Middle East studies at Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Opera Buffa

After nearly a year of internecine warfare, the Italian Communist Party has changed its name to Democratic Party of the Left. Since the redubbed party offers few clear new policies, outsiders might well ask, What's in a name? To which stalwarts of the old P.C.I. would reply, Everything.

It all began last November while the Berlin wall was crumbling. Party secretary Achille Occhetto announced his intention to form a new democratic socialist coalition, referred to as *La Cosa* ("The Thing") in its embryonic stage. But his project, a bold attempt at self-renewal, soon degenerated into a kind of tragicomic name game.

For years the P.C.I.'s leaders acted and thought like social democrats, but they were careful not to broadcast that to the rank and file, most of whom still revered the glories of the Bolshevik Revolution. So when Occhetto launched *La Cosa* he found himself with a revolt on his hands. About a third of the party's leadership voted against change, and its 1.5 million members were similarly divided. At local meetings workers wept and sang "Bandiera Rossa" ("Red Flag"), the anthem of the party that had helped defeat Fascism. When the P.C.I.'s share of the vote in the May local elections sagged from 30 percent to 24 percent, the opposition hardened.

Alarmed by threats of secession, Occhetto spent much of

the summer trying to give a name to "The Thing," seeking a symbol that would unite the seemingly disparate elements of the Italian left. Using polls and market research, he and his staff spent months testing dozens of names and symbols: Progressive Party, Labor Party, Party of the Left and innumerable variations on these themes. To their dismay, polls showed that a vast majority of party members—even those who favored a change in name—were viscerally attached to the old symbol, the hammer and sickle.

Occhetto found himself in a position like that of Coca-Cola after it tried to replace its famous soft drink: He needed to move ahead with his new product while somehow satisfying the demand for the old tried-and-true formula. The process was so drawn out and tortured that early in October a group of ninety-four Communist members of Parliament wrote a public letter urging Occhetto to hurry up. The solution Occhetto finally unveiled was a combination of new Coke and Coke Classic. He eliminated the word "Communist" from the name but kept the old hammer and sickle, in reduced form, in the party emblem.

The announcement will not end the name game. Occhetto's proposal has to be ratified at a party congress in January. The opposition announced its intention to do battle and may form a new Communist Party. At least Occhetto has ended the suspense. Now perhaps he can move from public relations to his real stated goal, "to give Italy something it has never had: a great reformist party capable of offering a credible alternative of government." ALEXANDER STILLE

Alexander Stille is a freelance writer living in Rome.

★ THE SECRET OF LEADERSHIP

*Two countries were, at best, adrift.
Two leaders made the basic shift
They had to make to make things work.
There's Gorbachev, and there's de Klerk.
But why these two? What made them brave
Enough to say the way to save
Their countries was to change the game?
It's in their hair, or lack of same.
The theory's this: If you have hair,
Your blood takes vital fluids there,
Which otherwise you'd use to fuel
The will that made you born to rule.
It does sound strange. I think it's true.
If you were bald, then so would you.*

Calvin Trillin

BEAT THE DEVIL.

An Injury to One . . .

On the edge of the fields, some four blocks from the center of Watsonville and a couple of miles east of the Pacific, stands the Green Giant frozen-food plant. Here, since World War II, food cutters and packers, mostly Mexican and Chicana women now paid about \$7 an hour, have prepared broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts and other crops grown in Northern California's Pajaro and Salinas valleys.

Over the years the labor force has steadily declined because of new machinery and the export of jobs. In May came a fresh shock. Grand Metropolitan, the food and beverage conglomerate headquartered in London which in 1988 engorged Pillsbury which earlier had engorged Green Giant which earlier still had engorged the original Russo Frozen Foods, announced that 370 of the remaining 520 workers would be laid off next January and processing moved to Irapuato, on the main road between Mexico City and Guadalajara.

The workers in Irapuato will get \$4 a day for the same jobs. The factory is in the area known as El Bajío, once the center of domestic corn and bean cultivation, now being taken over for export crops which, in the case of Green Giant, will be shipped to a nonunion minimum-wage plant in Ohio for repacking and distribution.

Consequences? Watsonville's economic base will shrink, and people who have worked in the plant for two decades will be slung into the jobless lines of a farm town still battered from the Loma Prieta earthquake of almost exactly a year ago. In Irapuato peasants will get jobs but pay a lot more for imported corn and beans, with government subsidies for these staples slashed under I.M.F. pressure.

Further consequences: Grand Met cuts its costs, thus eases its debt burden from the buyout of Pillsbury; Mexico's "discipline" in cutting food subsidies shows the North American banks its determination to make good on loans they extended in the late 1970s.

In the direct language of a leaflet distributed by the Green Giant workers: "So that New York bankers will get paid in full on some bad loans they made, so that frozen food executives will make super profits rather than ordinary ones, and so that the Grand Met board of directors can win their financial gamble and make the payments on their high interest loans, impoverished Mexican mothers no longer can afford to buy enough tortillas for their hungry children, and unemployed Watsonville frozen food workers don't know how they are going to pay their rent." Chalk up another victory for the international mobility of capital.

At first it did look like total victory. Local 912 of the Teamsters, which represents the Green Giant workers, negotiated severance rates and some retraining. Varnish on the coffin. Some of the workers, conspicuous among them Yolanda and Lauro Navarro, who have both been at the plant for more than a decade, declined to roll over easily and decided to organize a week of international protest against Grand Met.

It's many thousands of miles from the fields near Watsonville to the boardrooms of London, and at first the idea seemed romantic indulgence. In fact it is brusque necessity.

In an age when capital is a frequent flier and can redeploy effortlessly to the cheapest labor and the lowest taxes, the only way workers around the world can defend themselves is by collective international action. In the case of the Green Giant folk the plan is to have a week of protest against Grand Metropolitan from October 20 to 27. In Watsonville itself there will be a dance on the 20th and a march on the 27th. Throughout the week there will be picket lines at places where Grand Met products are sold. Among the demands: to restore the 370 workers to their jobs.

Grand Met owns Burger King, Häagen-Dazs, Smirnoff, J&B Scotch (as well as many other brands of alcohol that form part of Grand Met's job-retraining program), Alpo, Ski yogurt, Pearle opticals and much else. In the United States 15 percent of all Burger King franchises are owned directly by Grand Met. In the week of protest there will be pickets in Santa Cruz, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Washington, New York and Miami, where Burger King is headquartered. Internationally there will be pickets in Irapuato, Mexico City, Tokyo, Oxford and London, outside Grand Met headquarters. If you want to find out about actions in prospect or if you would like to organize a solidarity protest anytime between now and Christmas, call 408-728-8824 (English) and 408-722-9803 (Spanish).

In California the protest has already drawn an energetic response. At a press conference in Watsonville on October 11 put together by Local 912, organizers from the National Toxics Campaign along with consumer and church activists all pledged support. What has the Toxics Campaign got to do with job losses at a frozen-food plant? As demonstrated by a short video, *Dirty Business*, produced by Migrant Media in cooperation with Local 912 (write Box 2048, Freedom, CA 95019), Grand Met and other transnationals dump waste directly into the rivers of El Bajío. Industrial agriculture cannot exist without baneful pesticides and chemicals. People and places get destroyed in the same rhythms of exploitation.

Out of that press conference came a good slogan: May Green Giant/Grand Met become the Nestlé of the 90s.

The Hourglass and the Sand

Kuwait, the world's first offshore country, is now, at least at the level of public relations, having the world's first offshore bourgeois revolution. In Jidda, Kuwaitis have been mooting the future and letting the Sabahs know that if they ever get home, things won't be the same. One Kuwaiti, one vote? Democracy, maybe even for women? What counts is the money. If Kuwait ceases to be synonymous with the Sabahs, who will own the oil and the offshore assets, running at around \$100 billion?

From the Sabahs' point of view, it might seem preferable in the end to cut a deal with Saddam Hussein, assuming he is so disposed. The embargo could eventually bankrupt him. Suppose he suddenly invited the Emir back to Kuwait? Under the terms of such a putative deal, Iraq could get the Rumailah oilfield, the two islands of Bubiyan and Warbah and thus enlarged access to the Persian Gulf. Meanwhile, the Emir would

ALEXANDER COCKBURN

get back the bulk of Kuwait, agreeing to consult with Baghdad on all important decisions concerning oil production and what kind of cereal he was proposing to have for breakfast. If Saddam and the Emir did come to agreement, the United States would either have to go along or knock off the Emir and prime some successor to stand foursquare against any accommodation. The paradigm here is what happened to Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963.

Footnote: As he paces his hotel balcony in Taif, the Emir cannot be thinking entirely kindly of his Saudi hosts. In the week before Iraq's invasion the Saudis were pressing him to yield them the island—mudbank actually—of Qaruh. Satisfaction on this old claim would give the Saudis rights to the rich natural gas fields on which Qaruh reposes.

Nor, if he knows of it, must the Emir rejoice in certain material that the Iraqis are pressing upon journalists in Baghdad. This seeks to show that the Emir's sexual tastes run to mutilation and that Kuwait's police, pre-invasion, had been instructed not to interfere with limousines of certain high-ranking Kuwaitis parked outside a girls' secondary school. Old gulf hands reckon the Emir is a bit venerable for these activities and say that the limo slur is an imaginative recreation of a scandal in Abu Dhabi a few years ago, where the Crown Prince tried to lure schoolgirls into his car as they tripped forth from school. One intended prey was the daughter of the Iraqi Ambassador, who rushed about Abu Dhabi waving a revolver, swearing he'd shoot the Prince on sight.

Peace and Prices

The man whose body was crippled by war twenty-two years ago peered into the camera and said his piece again: "We have thousands of young men and women in the Persian Gulf. Not to defend democracy but to protect the big oil companies. We don't want another Vietnam. How many more body bags and graveyards and monuments, how many more Americans coming home in wheelchairs like me, will it take before we learn? Stand up. Speak out. Didn't we promise ourselves we would never let this happen again?"

It was late afternoon in early October in his Santa Monica offices that political consultant Bill Zimmerman finally thought Ron Kovic, Born on the Fourth of July, had got it right. They were making a thirty-second spot for Operation Real Security, an Arizona-based nonprofit run by another Vietnam vet, Jim Driscoll, which offers information and financial backing to peace groups across the country. On October 18 the Kovic spot was released in Washington. Already groups in fifty cities are committed to buying local TV time to air it. (It is available from 2076 Alameda Drive, Tempe, AZ 85282, 602-921-3090.)

An antiwar movement is cranking up rapidly, even if there is contention about what it should or should not say about Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the role of the U.N., a topic I discussed here a month ago and which has provoked a reaction that I will address in the letters column in short order.

The peace party is on far more favorable ground than it might have imagined a month ago. U.S. troops are eager to

come home. One account in the *Los Angeles Times* was so lurid with expressions of discontent that I almost expected to see the word "fraggings." After the budget debacle, public opinion here is extremely mutinous. For Bush war might seem the only way out; for capitalists it would be disaster.

I Dreamed I Read George Will Last Night

I trudged into *The Nation's* offices in New York the other day (somehow "trudged" is the *mot juste*) and young Ernesto, who keeps an eye on the building, handed me a newspaper with a sly look. Already a few days old, it had a column by George Will saying I'm a marginal fellow not worthy of notice. Finally, Will unleashed the big one: Cockburn is the last Stalinist and should be put in a case in the Smithsonian.

I rushed to Penn Station, jumped on the Amtrak and presented myself at the Smithsonian bright and early next morning, hoping for a spot in the national ossuary somewhere between Dr. Townsend and Major Douglas, founder of Social Credit. But the place was locked! George Bush had shut down the government except for the armed forces, I.R.S., F.B.I. and C.I.A. All around me on the steps were angry tourists brandishing copies of Will's column and clamoring for a glimpse of the petrified scrivener. I heard one matron from Ohio confide to her friends that she'd just seen me on *Donahue* and wondered whether I'd been on furlough from the Smithsonian or whether she'd been the victim of a hoax. "He looked so *natural*, sitting there next to Mr. Nader."

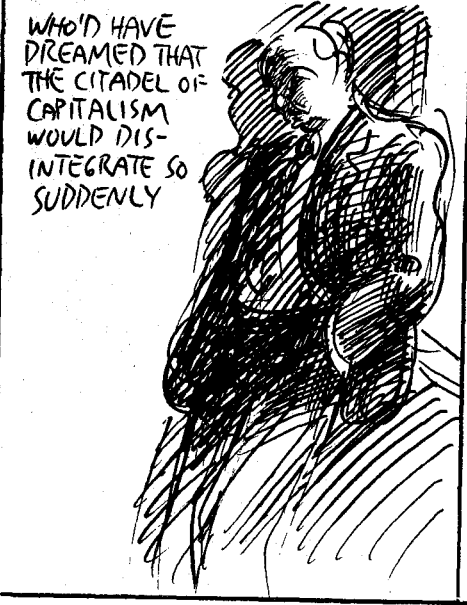
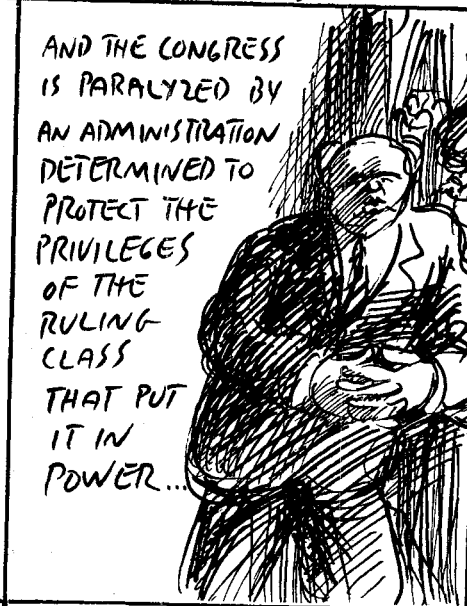
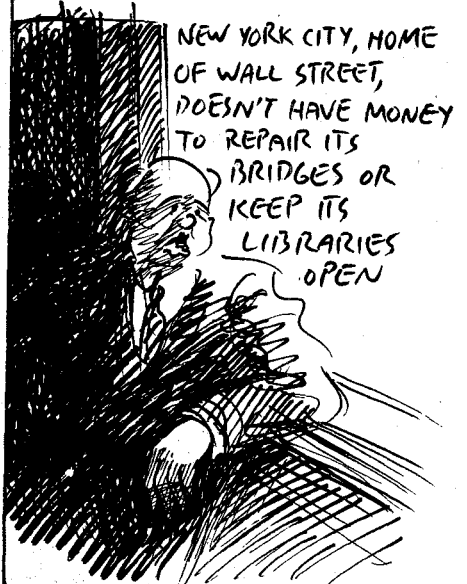
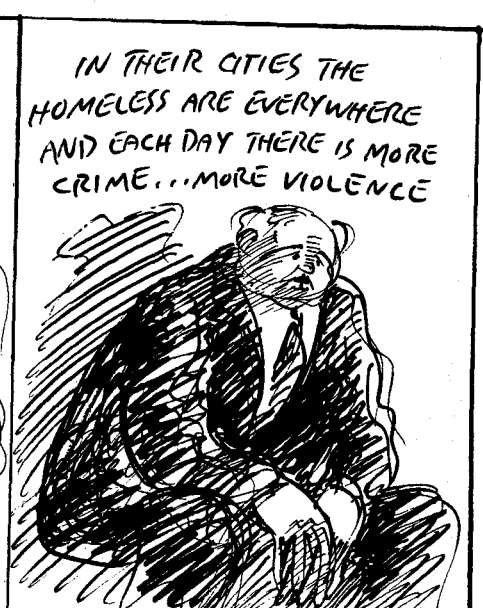
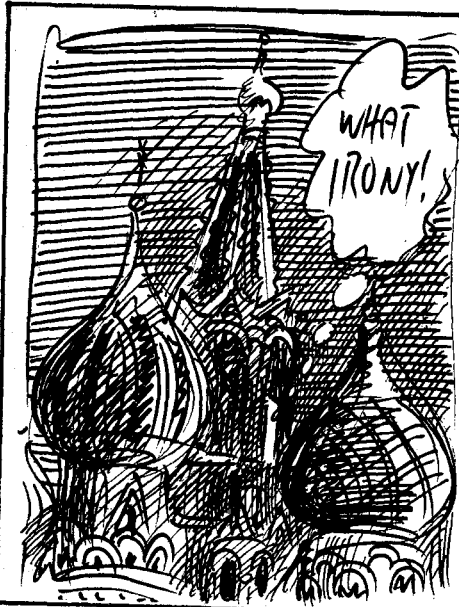
Friends asked me what I'd done to get up Will's nose so, and I said truthfully that it's a mystery to me. It can't have been anything I wrote about him in the past few years because I stopped reading him when his anchor to reality, Nancy Reagan, quit Washington. Even then I found him hard going. His prose is a bit like those descriptions of flying a helicopter at night in the Saudi desert: the want of an orienting horizon, dust and emptiness everywhere.

In fact, we have a common bond, sharing in our esteem at least one woman, my dear sister Sarah, of whose detective stories, published under the name Caudwell, Will has professed to be a great admirer. He wrote Sarah a mash note a while back, going on about her books. Sarah tried to persuade me he was a man of rare taste. I even caught her bravely trying to read one of his columns. Will told her he'd been put on to her books by another fan, Robert Bork. The judge even went to one of Sarah's readings at Chapters Bookstore in Washington and lurked behind a pillar like a lovesick calf, fleeing only when she embarked on an attack on the death penalty.

Will should beware lest he incur the Curse of Cockburn. Last to scourge me as Stalin's love slave was Martin Peretz, who was duly felled by a seizure in the lavatory of a Paris restaurant, awaking in hospital under the care of a Syrian surgeon brooding whether to intrude a healing scalpel into the mess that is Marty's brain. Nor was this the end of Peretz's travails. More recently his art collection in Cambridge was the successful target of thieves unknown, though some say the perp. was the ghost of Henry Fairlie, impelled to one last raid on his patron's treasure.

So Close

EDWARD SOREL



ARTICLES.

■ SEMITES AND ANTI-SEMITES

The Pat and Abe Show

ERIC ALTERMAN

It is a measure of how degraded the American political dialogue has become in the Reagan/Bush era that the most significant controversy to emerge thus far over the potentially disastrous deployment of more than 200,000 American troops in what may be a costly and debilitating oil war revolves around whether A.M. Rosenthal of *The New York Times* was correct to call Pat Buchanan an anti-Semite.

But the issue is a loaded one and hovers not far beneath the surface of a society seething with ethnic tensions. Was author and educator Joseph Campbell, immortalized by Bill Moyers on public television, a closet anti-Semite, as Brendan Gill charged, making much posthumous news? Was H.L. Mencken (another posthumous "discovery")? Is Michael Thomas one because his novel, *Hanover Place*, depicts the anti-Semitic way rich WASPs talk behind boardroom doors?

When asked whether his portrait of two money-grubbing Jews in *Mo' Better Blues* was deliberately anti-Semitic, Spike Lee replied that he couldn't make anti-Semitic films even if he wanted because the Jews run Hollywood and "that's a fact." Was his response anti-Semitic? Neal Gabler has persuasively argued that the worst that can be said about these Jewish executives is that they are no less racist than the executives who control virtually every other industry. Besides, Hollywood is owned not by Jews but by multinationals.

Did Gore Vidal's charge in the pages of this magazine that Norman Podhoretz and Midge Decter (whom he called "the Lunts of the right wing") were "fifth columnists" working on behalf of a "predatory people" go over the line? [See Vidal, "The Empire Lovers Strike Back," March 22, 1986.] I think *The Nation*, in defending Vidal's foolish invective as having been written in the "provocative idiom of irony," demonstrated insensitivity to the troubling implications of Vidal's language, ironic or not.

Each of these cases is unique, and not one has ever really been resolved. Taken together they emphasize the failure of the media to come to terms with the issues lurking in the language of bigotry, and specifically anti-Semitism. So it is worth looking at the Rosenthal-Buchanan exchange in some depth to see if we can extract some larger lessons.

With seven television appearances and two columns each week Buchanan is quite possibly the most visible of all our

superstar political pundits. He is also one of the most extreme voices imaginable in a democratic country. Neo-conservative editors and columnists never had any trouble with Buchanan when he accused patriotic Americans who opposed Reagan's illegal war in Nicaragua of "standing with . . . the Communists." They giggled and smirked when Buchanan noted that the "liberal wing of the Democratic Party has made itself the silent partner—the indispensable ally—of revolutionary communism." And they managed to contain themselves somehow when Buchanan observed that AIDS was simply nature's fair "retribution" on gays, who themselves "have declared war on nature." But let Buchanan break the mindless consensus on war in the gulf and blame Israel and its "amen corner" in the United States for promoting war and suddenly neocon sensibilities are shocked, shocked by the pro-fascist tendencies in his politics.

The accusation of anti-Semitism (and its moral equivalent, self-hating Jew) is, in the wake of Auschwitz and Birkenau, a particularly potent one. Ontologically, anti-Jewish prejudice is not any more reprehensible than any other kind of prejudice, be it racism, sexism, gay-bashing or goy-bashing. But the moral force of the accusation increases with the historical weight of the Holocaust. Many prominent American Jews and Jewish organizations were catastrophically silent when Jewish lives were at stake in the 1930s and 1940s and so are today understandably eager to err on the side of vigilance.

But because the accusation has become so powerful, some unscrupulous political operators see fit to deploy it where its relevance is not immediately apparent. As with most forms of character assassination, the accusation of anti-Semitism



ILLUSTRATIONS BY RANDALL ENOS

Eric Alterman, a senior fellow of the World Policy Institute, is at work on a book about Washington pundits for Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

1991 ROBERT MASUR LEGAL FELLOWSHIP

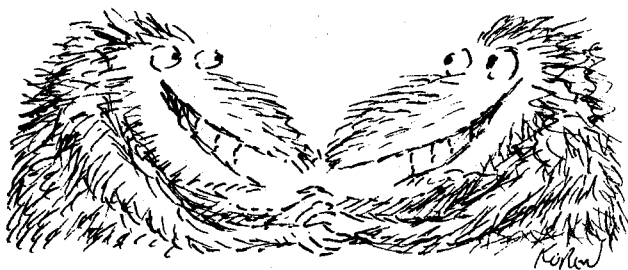
The Nation Institute is pleased to announce that applications are now being accepted for the 1991 Robert Masur Legal Fellowship Program. The program is designed to support work in civil rights and civil liberties and to encourage law students interested in public-interest legal careers. Named in memory of attorney Robert Masur, the Fellowship is awarded annually to a law student with a demonstrated commitment to public-interest legal work.

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ends the possibility of logical argument. If someone is successful in painting an opponent as a post-Holocaust anti-Semite, it is debasing even to argue the point. The accusation, as Buchanan correctly insists, is "used to frighten, intimidate, censor, and silence; to cut off debate; to so smear men's reputations that no one will listen to them again; to scar men so indelibly that no one will ever look at them again without saying, 'Say, isn't he an anti-Semite?'"

Rosenthal's indictment rests entirely upon two factors: Buchanan's distaste for the Shamir government's supporters in the United States who are trying to drag it into war, and the fact that he objected to "Jewish pressure" on his then-boss Ronald Reagan, in the matter of Reagan's 1985 visit to Bitburg cemetery in Germany where SS soldiers were buried. For these offenses Rosenthal trots out the charge of "blood libel," perhaps the most incendiary phrase available in the anti-anti-Semitic canon. He closes his indictment with characteristic sanctimony and self-obsession, apologizing, in a passage that contains the first-person pronoun four times, for not confronting "Buchananian nastiness" earlier, and purposely misquoting Jesus ("forgive them not, Father, for they know what they did") so as to demand the withholding of divine forgiveness for Buchanan's sins. (In a feat unparalleled in the annals of Rosenthalosity, the man actually manages to quote himself quoting himself.)

Buchanan's exact words: "There are only two groups beating the drums for war in the Middle East—the Israeli Defense Ministry and its amen corner in the United States. . . . The Israelis want this war desperately because they want the United States to destroy the Iraqi war machine." Rosenthal's direct translation: "The Jews are trying to drag us into war. Only Jews want war. Israeli Jews want war to save Israel's hide. American Jews who talk of military action against Iraq want war because it would suit Israeli interests. They are willing to spill American blood for Israeli interests."

Just who is the anti-Semite here? Buchanan blames Israel and its "amen corner." Rosenthal translates this to mean "Jews," and then quickly reaches to remove the "customary cowardly shield" that "every time somebody criticizes Israel, the Jews cry anti-Semitism." Says Rosenthal, that is quite simply "a lie."

Well excuse me, but at the risk of being customarily cowardly, Buchanan did not mention "Jews" in his indictment; Rosenthal did. True, when Buchanan spoke of Israel's "amen corner," he was surely not speaking of the Greek lobby, and the neoconservative columnists with whom he picked his fight are Jewish. But to Rosenthal, Buchanan's indictment implicates all Jews, including, I imagine, my 11-month-old nephew. To anyone with the slightest degree of political sophistication, however, the quote implies "some Jews," or even "those few people, who happen to be Jewish, along with some non-Jews like Alfonse D'Amato." Interpreting criticism of particular Jews to embrace all Jews is itself a kind of anti-Semitism. Thus "the Jews," not Ivan Boesky or Dennis Levine, are behind the insider trading scandal. "The Jews," not Karl Marx (forget Friedrich Engels), wrote the *Communist Manifesto*. "The Jews," not Abe Rosenthal, are

responsible for the literary crimes that grace the *New York Times* Op-Ed page twice a week.

The second component of Rosenthal's accusation rests on Buchanan's use of the term "Jewish pressure," when certain Jews tried to convince Ronald Reagan to stay away from Bitburg. Once again, it is Rosenthal, not Buchanan, who is holding all Jews responsible for the alleged sins of the few. That "Jewish pressure" was exerted, unsuccessfully, on Ronald Reagan to try to prevent the visit is unarguable. "Jewish pressure" is thrown around all the time in Washington and it is done so proudly. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (Aipac), the "pro-Israel" lobby in Washington, has spent the past ten years purposefully building and enhancing its reputation for deploying its "Jewish pressure" on matters it deems to be of Jewish concern, from Egypt to El Salvador. In that regard, anyway, it has done a pretty fair job. Just what did Rosenthal think Aipac director Thomas Dine had in mind back in 1984 when he announced, after the defeat of Senator Charles Percy (who supported the establishment of a Palestinian entity), that "all the Jews in America, from coast to coast, gathered to oust Percy. And the American politicians—those who hold public positions now, and those who aspire—got the message"? Goyish pressure?

The equation of anti-Semitism with opposition to Israel's government and with the "pressure" its supporters and operatives exert on the American political process demeans the lives of those who have suffered under true anti-Semitism—and there is no shortage of those—and silences legitimate debate on U.S. policy in the Middle East. A recent fundraising letter sent out by the American Jewish Congress and signed by its executive director, Henry Siegman, veered uncomfortably close to this territory as well. The letter accuses James Zogby, president of the Arab American Institute, of being a proponent of "the new anti-Semitism" and appears to link him with neo-Nazi David Duke, as well as with the proudly anti-Semitic Louis Farrakhan, on the basis of Zogby's campaign to limit the influence of pro-Israel PACs in American elections. The A.J.C.'s objection, according to the letter, is that Zogby insists that five U.S. senators who received a great deal of pro-Israel PAC money are "not operating in the interests of the people who elected them."

Given the corruption inherent in the PAC system of financing electoral politics in the United States, coupled with the daily revelations that accompany the Congressional HUD and S&L scandals, most Americans would be surprised to learn that their representatives were "operating" in their interests. A pro-Israel PAC would have to be stupid to raise money for people whom it did not expect to behave in its interest. Aipac and its related PACs have been accused of a great many things, but stupidity—particularly in the raising and spending of campaign contributions—is not one of them.

Clearly some are engaging in a dangerous and ultimately degrading game in attempting to silence their political opponents with a smear of disabling proportions. Following on Rosenthal's column, Aipac sent an advisory to its 50,000 members, encouraging them to meet with newspaper editors in order to "ask them if they believe the Buchanans are pre-

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senting information their readers want." Aipac suggests that its members offer the names of Norman Podhoretz and other far-right-wing Shamir government cheerleaders as alternatives, or such "liberals" as (I kid you not) Alan Der-showitz, Charles Krauthammer and one A.M. Rosenthal. "No one is saying the Buchanans should have no right to express their views." Who — Aipac? Of course not. But just the same, Aipac would like to see Buchanan silenced and replaced with pundits who are "fair-minded when it comes to the Middle East."

Buchanan is perhaps being a bit paranoid when he suspects a "preplanned, orchestrated smear campaign" designed to deprive him of his readership. But with Aipac and Rosenthal after him, need we remind ourselves that even paranoids have real enemies?

Still, as Buchanan gleefully insists, the fact that "Abe Rosenthal tried to pull a revolver on me and it went off while it was still in his holster" does not by itself exonerate Buchanan of the indictment. It merely discredits one member of the posse. As Jacob Weisberg carefully demonstrates in the October 22 *New Republic*, Buchanan is less an anti-Semite than a Catholic McCarthyite spoiling for a fight with anybody who gets in his way. (While in college Buchanan was arrested and jailed for fighting with *two* cops who were attempting to give him a ticket.)

Without regurgitating all the arguments, I would say that Buchanan's sympathy for accused Nazi criminals is worrisome. His bleeding heart for the suffering of West Bank Palestinians is uncharacteristic. His anger at the Jewish establishment for its opposition to the construction of a convent at Auschwitz was insensitive and peevish. But Buchanan is no anti-Semite. He is a rabid anticommunist with only an incidental and quite ambivalent commitment to democracy. Of his support for accused Nazi war criminals, Buchanan once explained to me, "These people are being given the shaft. There is political cowardice so thick you can cut it with a knife. If these guys were accused of being Communist spies on behalf of the Soviet Union during World War II, you wouldn't have to ask me; there would be 10,000 reporters working in their behalf demanding a hearing where these guys can confront their accusers."

The closest Buchanan came to crossing the line on anti-Semitism was his insistence, in late August, that kids with names "like McAllister, Murphy, Gonzales, and Leroy Brown" were going to die if war broke out. A *New Republic* editor unfairly juxtaposed this claim with another Buchanan column that blamed only Jewish writers like Rosenthal, Krauthammer, Richard Perle and Henry Kissinger for dragging us into war. But in the first instance Buchanan was arguing with the London *Economist* rather than the Jewish neocons. In the second he made no mention of dead Irish or black kids, but only implored the neocons to consider whether America's vital interests could truly be served by war. Buchanan was certainly incorrect when he said that "only" Israel and its amen corner wanted to drag America into war. So do a bunch of emirs, sheiks and the like. But blood libel? divine unforgiveness? Give me a break. There are plenty of reasons why the Almighty might want to take a

good hard look at Buchanan's résumé before granting him the ultimate absolution, but his willingness to take on the neoconservative war lobby ought to fall pretty far down on that list.

If the Rosenthal-Buchanan episode contains any lesson for the future, it is that journalists need to be just as vigilant in addressing the smear of anti-Semitism as they are in seeking to expose the disease itself. William F. Buckley Jr. (of all people) made an astonishingly sensitive offer of mediation, but the fact that so many editorialists have bought into Rosenthal's intellectually specious emotionalism, from the far-right Eric Breindel of the *New York Post* to the liberal Richard Cohen of *The Washington Post*, is evidence that the tactic remains an effective one. And by the way: What the hell kind of country has Pat Buchanan as its best-known political commentator anyway? □

■ LETTER FROM EUROPE

The New Holy Alliance

DANIEL SINGER

The balance of power in international relations shifts slowly. Yet there are moments of truth when light is suddenly thrown on the altered landscape, showing not only higher peaks and lower valleys but also perspectives that are entirely new. The Kuwait crisis is acting as such an eye-opener. In August, the unconditional Soviet approval of the United Nations resolution giving its blessing to U.S. intervention was not merely additional proof that Moscow no longer has the ambition to be the leader of the have-not nations. It suggested that the Soviet Union, in keeping with its domestic developments, is ready to take its place in the capitalist concert of nations as one of the upholders of the status quo. (Was the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to a "Communist" leader for the first time coincidental?)

Hence the meeting in Helsinki on September 9 between Presidents George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev was, in a sense, an encounter between the suzerain and a vassal—an important vassal with plenty of room for maneuver, and one whose backing, or blessing, is most precious, but no longer a rival offering an alternative vision of the world. No wonder that Washington welcomed the Soviet Union into the Middle East—or that the Saudis established diplomatic relations with Moscow—since the former capital of revolution was now accepting the West's rules of the game.

But history has its ironies. The moment when Washington at last achieves its postwar objective of becoming the clearly dominant superpower also marks the visible beginning of the end of its hegemony. The British poodle, though it may bark like a bulldog, cannot alone conceal the fact that the Western alliance is no longer what it used to be. Secretary

Daniel Singer is The Nation's Europe correspondent.

of State James Baker, visiting the European capitals and Tokyo with cap in hand, illustrated the reason for this metamorphosis, which is the shift in the global financial balance. Admittedly, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were ready to pay for the cost of the operation, a German-dominated Europe as yet has no clear policy of its own, and Japan is a giant only in economic terms. Thus the United States may well try to replace OPEC or extend NATO beyond the frontiers of Europe. But the words of Italian Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis about "no taxation without representation" are a sign of things to come.

Meanwhile, is it fair to describe Gorbachev as the United States' junior partner? To back up my case I shall suggest what, in my view, a socialist leader might have said in Helsinki. He, too, would have condemned Saddam Hussein, the mass murderer of—among others—Kurds and Communists. But he would also have reminded the assembled press that when the Butcher of Baghdad was using chemical weapons, most of them turned a blind eye or even praised him for defending civilization against the Ayatollah Khomeini's Persian threat; their current indignation is thus not above suspicion. And he would have answered those who, like U.N. Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, claim that one sin (in Palestine) does not justify another (in Kuwait). While this is perfectly true, he would have said the fact that an organization, or a society, punishes some crimes and ignores others tells us a great deal about that organization or that society.

My imaginary socialist leader, while denying the credentials of the Iraqi propagandists, would not have denied the truth of some of their arguments. In a poverty-stricken Middle East, the hidden or open wealth of the sheiks, emirs and other sultans—the billions invested in Western business, the millions spent conspicuously in the casinos of the French Riviera—is equally indecent. He would have asked President Bush, ex-boss of the C.I.A., when and where he developed his horror for the big bullies harming their smaller neighbors: in Guatemala, Grenada or Panama? He would have told the Western politicians and their scribes that above their hypocritical odes to the rule of law floats not the perfume of

Arabia but the stench of petroleum. Above all, in this North-South conflict he would have spoken to the people of both sides, addressing them over the heads of their rulers.

But Gorbachev could do nothing of the kind. In part, this was because the Soviet Union had been Saddam's chief backer since the days of Brezhnev, beating out the French as Iraq's main arms supplier. But more important, Gorbachev could not speak like that and expect Bush's approval for the Soviet Union's admission into the Western financial community or U.S. help in the extraction of Soviet oil and other minerals. Even if one takes at face value Gorbachev's assurance that "it would be very superficial, oversimplified, to judge that the Soviet Union can be bought for dollars," this does not alter the argument. One is tempted to paraphrase the old Chartist ditty about British journalists:

There is no way to bribe or twist,
Thank God, an honest "Soviet socialist."
But if you knew what he could do
unbribed there is no occasion to . . .

Indeed, the argument about Russia's joining the capitalist concert of nations would only be strengthened, showing the evolution of Soviet foreign policy as part of a deep conversion and not merely the result of a bribe. *Perestroika* began gloriously in *glasnost* as a healthy, if inevitable, rejection of the Stalinist heritage. Then, as Soviet leaders got bogged down in the economic crisis without any socialist perspectives, they veered in the direction of capitalism. Something similar is happening in diplomacy. Gorbachev's "new thinking" triumphantly inaugurated a new era, showing how little was really needed to set the world on the road to disarmament. But those beautiful beginnings now seem to have degenerated into a latter-day version of the Holy Alliance, taken here loosely to refer to that conservative pact arrived at in Vienna in 1815 by the powers that had defeated Napoleon; its purpose was to preserve the status quo in Europe.

The two trends are interconnected. That both *Pravda* and *Izvestia* should now be referring to "American imperialism" in quotations is not accidental. The quickened march toward private property and the market, the burning desire to be



fully involved as quickly as possible in the international capitalist division of labor, lead logically to "the emerging world order" proclaimed by Eduard Shevardnadze from the U.N. rostrum in New York.

If this interpretation is correct, then the current honeymoon between the Soviet Union and the United States may not be due to the Copernican discovery made by Vitaly Korotich and Studs Terkel that what makes Americans happy also brings happiness to the Russians [see "A Couple of Guys Talking About Peace," July 30/August 6]. It may be due to the acceptance by Moscow of a less lofty principle—that what is good for General Motors (or, to use a more apt cliché, the Seven Sisters) is good for the world at large.

After such harsh words one might normally expect a sigh for Stalin or at least some nostalgia for the "proletarian internationalism" of comrade Brezhnev. Not in this case. To argue that efforts are now under way to restore capitalism in Russia and Eastern Europe does not at all imply that this part of the world was previously in any way socialist. Similarly, to claim that the Soviet Union is now quite openly moving into the international concert of great powers does not at all suggest that hitherto its diplomacy was an instrument of socialist revolution.

In the long run, Soviet foreign policy will depend on the outcome of its venture on the road to capitalism.

Only for a brief spell after 1917 did the Bolsheviks view their survival as dependent on the westward spread of world revolution. Thereafter Stalin subordinated the international Communist movement to the interests of his own foreign policy in a ruthless and often shameful fashion (the hand-over of German Communists to the Nazis and the betrayal of Greek guerrillas are among the best-known examples). The point is that during the Stalin era millions of people throughout the world were convinced that Moscow was the headquarters of international revolution, that the Soviet Union was the main front in this struggle and that a new socialist order was being forged there despite the odds.

In the past third of a century, say since Khrushchev's indictment of Stalin in 1956, the situation has been much more ambiguous. Even before *glasnost*, only a rapidly dwindling band still believed that the Soviet Union offered a solution to the major questions of our time. Nevertheless the Russians had a system distinctly different from capitalism, and the aura attached to its name had an influence on its foreign policy. It was still in Moscow's interests to appear as the champion of the downtrodden. When Khrushchev negotiated the rules of coexistence with Kennedy, he had to claim, at least officially, that the nuclear stalemate would not hinder movements of national liberation. Quite the contrary: The Cuban missile crisis and the Vietnam War were

part of that confrontation over the right to rebel against the established order.

Historians will argue for years over the influence of the October Revolution on the fate of socialism. At present, very negative balance sheets are being drawn in Europe for the abortive experiment in the export of revolution. In the Third World, on the debit side is the fact that, wherever it came to the rescue of a struggling regime, Moscow tried to impose its political and economic model, even in countries where revolution had genuinely come from below. On the credit side, one must remember that the Soviet Union was the only check on the Pax Americana, the only external obstacle to U.S. imperialism—without quotations. Of course, the radicalism of the Soviet posture should not be exaggerated. The gerontocrats who sat in the Kremlin before Gorbachev, while happy to grab whatever fell into their laps, were no great adventurers. They avoided direct confrontation with Washington where it really mattered, notably in the Middle East. Nevertheless, for all its ambiguity, it is this chapter of Soviet resistance that is now coming rapidly to an end.

This ambiguity still weighs on us all. I had in mind a title for this piece as I sat down to write: "The Unholy Alliance." This implied that George, Maggie, Helmut or François could, in my opinion, be expected to stoop to any level, because that is the nature of a bourgeois politician. Mikhail, on the other hand, because of 1917, socialism or whatever, could not go beyond certain bounds without stigma. But I was mistaken. The appropriate title is clearly "The Holy Alliance," a reference to that pact alluded to earlier. The paradox is that the Soviet Union is joining the contemporary and worldwide equivalent of the Holy Alliance at the very time when, at home, it is entering a period of major social upheaval.

None of this should be taken to mean that Russia is vanishing as a major actor in world politics. Far from it. There was no love lost among the members of the original Holy Alliance either, and each of them had plenty of leeway for action. Today, although its economic weaknesses are readily apparent, the Soviet Union remains a nuclear giant. As such, it is still the United States' only serious partner in disarmament negotiations. The French fear of Germany and the European resentment of American domination are just two of the many cards that a skillful player like Gorbachev can use when negotiating with Washington. The Soviet Union, stretching across the Urals, is a Eurasian power; today, conscious of the advantages this offers, it is trying to improve its relations with both China and Japan. Indeed, it could still play an important and perhaps a moderating role in the present gulf crisis.

Ultimately, a nation's diplomacy reflects its domestic structure and policies. In the long run, then, Soviet foreign policy will depend on the outcome of its venture on the road to capitalism. In the meantime, it will be shaped by more immediate struggles. The so-called radicals like Boris Yeltsin or the mayors of Moscow and Leningrad have a very definite foreign policy agenda: They believe that aid begins at home. They are against any "ideological" investments and "egali-

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tarian" ventures; indeed, they would like not only to cut aid but also to redeem some bad debts from the Third World. If Gorbachev keeps full control, with his greater awareness of diplomatic assets, the transition will be slower. Cuba will provide an immediate test of the new strategy. But the Persian Gulf crisis has already made the main lesson plain. Moscow no longer pretends to offer a historical alternative to the West. The Soviet Union has ceased to be a protagonist, the chief antagonist, in the major contest of our times.

As I said at the start, in this hour of apparent victory the United States perceives the beginnings of its potential defeat. At the same time, the end of Soviet ambiguity presents progressive movements throughout the world with both challenges and opportunities. That clearly is a matter for another letter. For now, it is enough just to draw attention to the bitter end of a great illusion. □

■ CENSORING GAY EXPRESSION

The Love That Dare Not Speak

GARA LAMARCHE AND
WILLIAM B. RUBENSTEIN

“C ongress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech . . . except when the speech is by or about lesbians and gay men.” The First Amendment hasn’t yet been amended that way, but it’s not at all obvious if one considers a flurry of recent censorship incidents, all involving homophobia:

§ Congress, spurred by Senator Jesse Helms, bars the National Endowment for the Arts from funding “homoerotic” art, thereby equating art involving gay themes with obscenity. Now, all N.E.A. grant recipients must sign an oath declaring, among other things, that their art is free of homoeroticism. Meanwhile, the N.E.A.’s governing body, the National Council on the Arts, overrides the unanimous recommendations of its peer review panel and cancels grants to four performance artists, three of whom are openly gay.

§ Congress amends a District of Columbia law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The amendment allows religiously affiliated educational institutions to discriminate against lesbians, gay men and gay rights advocates.

§ Offended by safe-sex education materials produced with private funds by Gay Men’s Health Crisis, Congress—again incited by Helms—effectively cuts off government funds for AIDS education targeted at the gay community by prohibiting the Centers for Disease Control from funding

educational programs that might “promote or encourage, directly, homosexual activity.”

§ Facing criticism from conservative members of Congress, the Secretary of Health and Human Services disavows a government report on youth suicide that found a remarkable prevalence of suicide among, and called for an end to discrimination against, gay youth.

This censorious mentality is hardly limited to acts of the federal government. For instance, while most people are aware that there has been a sharp rise in book-banning incidents in public schools and libraries during recent years, they may not realize that many books are blacklisted solely because they treat homosexuality sympathetically:

§ In Saginaw, Michigan, *Young, Gay and Proud* is attacked as obscene by the American Family Association.

§ *Just Hold On* is removed from school libraries in Vancouver, Washington.

§ *The Lord is My Shepherd and He Knows I’m Gay*, by the Rev. Troy Perry, and *View from Another Closet*, by Janet Bodes, are attacked as “pornographic” in Michigan.

§ Conservatives try to ban *Understanding Gay Relatives and Friends* in Indiana on the theory that it attempts to “get people to accept the homosexual lifestyle, like there is nothing wrong with it.”

§ A Pennsylvania high school library removes Jerzy Kozinski’s *Being There* because “the main character has a homosexual experience.”

§ In Arlington Heights, Texas, a school principal prohibits the school paper from publishing the results of a student survey on attitudes toward homosexuality.

This is far from an exhaustive list. From Utah (where education officials attempted to ban references to gay victims from a visiting international Holocaust exhibit) to Memphis (where an ordinance prohibits minors from attending live performances that deal with homosexuality in any way), speech is being censored because it deals with homosexuality.

If these incidents are reminiscent of the McCarthy era, that may be because there’s been nothing like them since those terrible days of repression. Indeed, some of this censorship might be attributed to the similarities between today’s America and that of the 1950s. McCarthyism arose following the conclusion of World War II as the country, having defeated an external enemy, searched for internal enemies. The targets of the 1950s witch hunts were both Communists and other leftists, labeled “subversives,” and homosexuals, labeled “sexual perverts.” Today, as the cold war mentality collapses, enemies are again being found at home, but this time lesbians and gay men are leading the list.

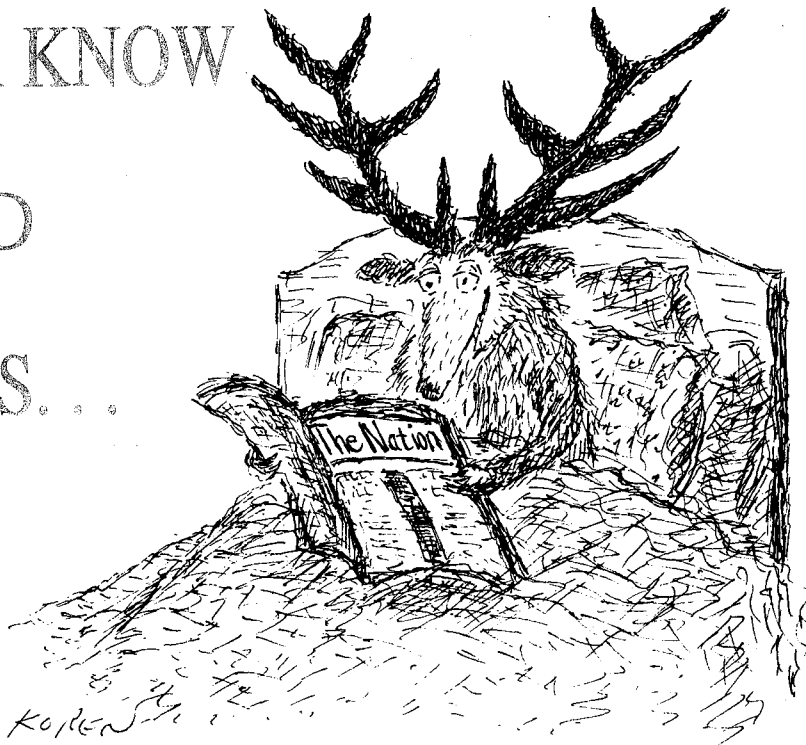
Some of this censorship might also be considered a backlash to the increased awareness of lesbian and gay issues brought about by the AIDS epidemic. Several incidents of censorship can be tied directly to AIDS:

§ The Texas legislature grudgingly backed AIDS education only after attaching a requirement that courses warn students that homosexuality is an unacceptable life style and a state crime.

§ Shenandoah, Iowa, school officials canceled a drama

Gara LaMarche is program director of PEN American Center’s Freedom-to-Write Committee; William B. Rubenstein is director of the A.C.L.U.’s Lesbian and Gay Rights Project.

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class's production of *Warren—A True Story*, a play about a person with AIDS, because it was not sufficiently critical of homosexuality.

§ And someone in Springfield, Missouri, took a more violent approach, firebombing the home of Brad Evans, a Southwest Missouri State University student who spoke out in support of the production on campus of Larry Kramer's play *The Normal Heart*.

Because AIDS has led, in some instances, to a more open discourse about homosexuality, it has simultaneously provided new opportunities for censorship. However, neither the current repressive climate nor the spread of AIDS can explain what motivates antigay censorship in the first place. After all, antigay crusaders such as Anita Bryant flourished during the more liberated, pre-AIDS era of the 1970s.

A third important factor contributing to the current censorship arises from the particular manner in which our society regulates sexual orientation. Aiming to keep lesbians and gay men "in the closet," society's oppression of homosexuals is based on censorship—of speech as much as, if not more than, conduct. Society rarely polices homosexual conduct directly, although the Supreme Court gave it the green light to do so in *Bowers v. Hardwick*, upholding Georgia's sodomy law. Instead, society polices the *expression* of sexual identity, turning "coming out" into a political declaration. As more lesbians and gay men make this declaration, society fights back by muzzling expression—increasingly, with violence.

Finally, speech by and about gay themes is inordinately censored because it is situated at the confluence of a number of other repressive forces within our society: the muting of discourse about sexuality of any kind; the cold rejection of "difference," whether based on race, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or any other factor; and the packaging of sexual orientation as an issue of "morality." Such speech challenges these powerful oppressions, upsetting an "asexual" public discourse and threatening uninformed, but deeply held, assumptions about what is moral. It is therefore censored, just as other threats to these forces—from a woman's right to reproductive freedom to 2 Live Crew—are controlled.

Opposition to all censorship has been, and must remain, a

central tenet of the lesbian and gay rights movement. Given the nature of the struggle for gay rights, lesbians and gay men have a special stake in the First Amendment. Straight supporters of free speech must ask themselves what they would be doing if, within the span of one year, Congress passed four laws restricting speech by and about African-Americans or women; if antiracism courses were forced to give equal time to the Ku Klux Klan; if there was a wave of book bannings involving works by Latino authors about their ethnic experience. Then they need to speak out—loud and often. □

Democratic Forces

(Continued From Front Cover)

to present a unified national front in the face of the continuing Iraqi occupation and to head off grumblings about the family's claim to legitimacy. Kuwaiti democrats used the conference as an opportunity to push for a commitment from the Sabahs to act on longstanding demands for liberalization. As one leading advocate put it, "We think the time to talk about democracy is now while our government is out of power and in exile." The timing was right and the democrats' pressure resulted in a set of dramatic, if vague, declarations from Kuwait's Crown Prince, Sheik Saad al-Abdullah al-Sabah, who pledged to a standing ovation on October 13 to "solidify democracy and deepen popular participation." Despite the fact that women were not invited to attend the congress, the Crown Prince also promised that Kuwaiti women would "play a greater role and make more noble contributions in liberated Kuwait." His remarks in this visible public forum are the most recent development in a continuing struggle between the Sabahs and more liberal elements in Kuwaiti domestic politics.

Prior to the Iraqi invasion, the Sabah family faced a challenge from a growing coalition of increasingly outspoken citizens, including prominent members of the establishment. The pro-democracy forces called themselves in Arabic *al-harakah al-dusturyyya* ("Constitutional Movement"). Activists included businessmen, academics, journalists and other professionals, as well as former parliamentarians and members of leading commercial families. The rallying cry was straightforward: Bring back the fifty-member elected National Assembly, Kuwait's Parliament, dissolved in 1986 by royal decree; unshackle the censored press; permit freedom of opinion and association and the right to organize independent institutions.

Although ex-legislators have pushed for a return of the National Assembly since 1986, the Constitutional Movement gained momentum only in late 1989, after the Emir refused to accept petitions signed by 30,000 citizens calling for the revival of parliamentary and democratic life in Kuwait. In reaction, former parliamentarians began to host

Virginia N. Sherry has monitored Kuwait and other countries in the Middle East and North Africa for the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights.

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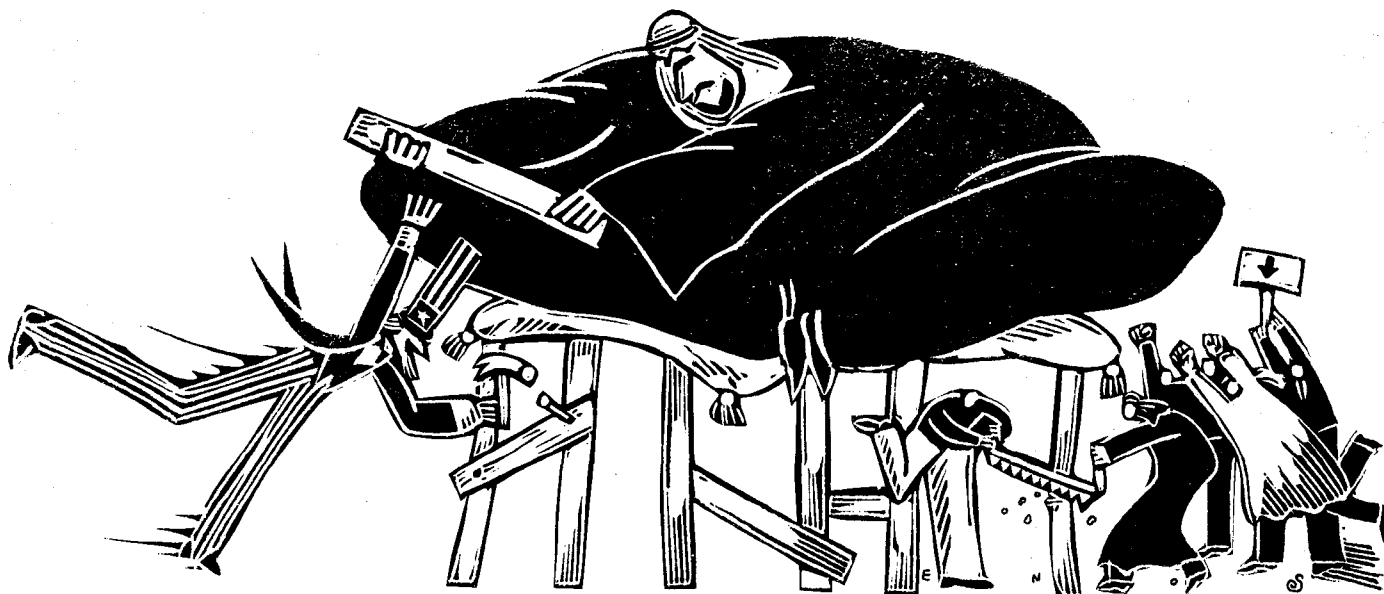
traditional private assemblies, or *diwaaniyyaat*, at their homes to rally supporters and send a signal to the authorities. Although the first assembly took place on December 4, 1989, without incident, some meetings over the next few months were forcibly dispersed—the security forces used barricades, barbed wire, police dogs, tear gas, stun and sound grenades, and water cannons on peaceful crowds. Witnesses said that at an assembly on January 8, truncheon-wielding members of Kuwait's elite special forces beat, among others, a 70-year-old former member of the National Assembly and a former vice president of Kuwait University. One leader of the movement said that the authorities were "stunned" by the turnout at the assemblies, which attracted thousands.

In February the State Department appeared to excuse human rights abuses in Kuwait by politely stating in its annual report that the situation "continued to be affected by security concerns stemming from the large expatriate population and Iranian-inspired subversion." This analysis provides part but not all of the picture. Threats and attacks in Kuwait by pro-Iranian Shiites, including the bombing of oil installations, have occurred, and it is against this backdrop that government crackdowns against Kuwait's minority Shiite community—including detention without charge and allegations of beatings and electric shock during interrogation—must be viewed. But the pro-democracy movement insists that the persistent violation of certain basic rights cannot be justified solely on security grounds. As one senior activist told me in March: "The ruling family is an interest group. They are willing to give up some power but not the core of their power. The formula is simple: We are asking for democracy. Unlike AIDS, democracy is a good virus. We need more pressure on the government." He noted that half of all Kuwaitis travel to Europe and the United States each year, and that the dramatic political changes in Eastern Europe did not go unnoticed by this savvy, educated population. "The winds of democracy are blowing," he said hopefully, "and, as we say in Arabic, you can't cover the sun with your palm."

The opposition's list of complaints is long. Of the Emir's 1.9 million subjects, fewer than 800,000 are citizens, and of those only approximately 62,000 are eligible to vote. None of them are women, who continue to be denied suffrage despite their substantial gains in education and employment. An archaic, long-challenged Nationality Law disfranchises native Kuwaitis and the foreign-born alike by stipulating a family's proof of residency in the country prior to 1920 as a condition for first-class citizenship. Liberalizing the legal basis for citizenship was not an item on the agenda of the Constitutional Movement, whose members doubtless included those wishing to maintain their political and economic privilege. Nevertheless, Kuwaiti progressives charge that the Nationality Law "deprives a broad sector of the country's population who were born, educated and are employed in Kuwait of the right to citizenship."

Freedom of association, although guaranteed by the Kuwaiti Constitution, is narrowly circumscribed. Political parties are banned. Trade unions and other lawfully incorporated associations exist at the pleasure of the state: By law, the authorities can dissolve any organization or its board of directors without judicial review of the decision. Kuwaiti activists charge that licenses are not granted to societies and trade unions "despite their commitment to all conditions set by the law." Examples include a proposed Consumer Rights Protection Society and a trade union for Kuwait Petroleum Corporation workers. Public employees are treated like servants: Under the Civil Service Law, the Council of Ministers can fire any worker without reason and without judicial review.

Pre-publication censorship has haunted the Kuwaiti press. According to information supplied by a former parliamentarian, "no newspaper can publish any article unless it is given a green light by the censor, who takes a seat in the newspaper's headquarters." In an interview more than a year ago, Information Minister Jaber Mubarak al-Hamad al-Sabah was asked when the press censorship policy would be reviewed, since, as one reporter boldly put it, "our papers are virtually carbon copies of each other." The minister's



reply: "Censorship will remain in force to keep our publications free from impurities. The censor is there to suppress whatever is deemed likely to undermine our national unity or compromise our relations with our neighbors or friends." Kuwait's press law permits the state to close temporarily any newspaper or withdraw its license without providing reasons; the papers do not have the right to take the matter to the courts. Rights monitors in Kuwait also report that since 1963 "all applications for new newspapers have been denied except two, and all requests have been rejected to change papers from weeklies to dailies, except one."

Cementing the ruling family's ability to maintain its dominance and periodically clamp down on civil rights in Kuwait was what gulf expert Rosemarie Said Zahlan terms the citizenry's "tacit acceptance of the political status quo." While the Sabahs controlled and personally benefited from the vast oil wealth, they also distributed it: Life in Kuwait has been transformed by dizzying modernization and a lavish social welfare system. The government spent \$6 billion alone from 1951 to 1981 buying, at inflated prices, private land for massive projects. The elite reaped major financial advantages from the spectacular development, but it also trickled down. The civil service mushroomed. Foreign workers poured in by the hundreds of thousands; by 1965, non-Kuwaitis outnumbered the natives. During this period, the affluence enjoyed by Kuwaitis coexisted easily with the Sabahs' control of the country. But, as Zahlan writes, "Underneath the modern structures, the old political order, which was hastily shrouded once oil wealth became available . . . remained largely intact. . . . Although movements calling for participation in government have existed in the Gulf states since 1938, they have not succeeded in transforming the essence of the old system of rule."

The next phase of the Constitutional Movement's struggle unfolded when the Emir decreed in April the creation of a seventy-five-member National Council—with fifty members elected, the others appointed—for a four-year period. The council's major role would be to make nonbinding recommendations about the future of parliamentary life in Kuwait. The pro-democracy forces reacted immediately. The council violated the Constitution, they said; it was a toothless substitute for the real thing and "an attempt to

deceive the public and distract attention from real democratic demands." They called for a boycott of the election of council members, set for June 10.

The war of nerves continued. Between May 7 and May 8, the security forces rounded up and detained at least twelve leading figures in the pro-democracy movement, including two former senior deputies, Jaasim al-Qatami and Ahmad al-Khatib. They were charged with holding illegal gatherings, distributing leaflets and obstructing the security forces from performing their duties. Immediately after the arrests, a fax sent to the United States by a university professor and human rights activist in Kuwait included scribbled handwritten details and the following entreaty: "Please use all possible means to put pressure on the Kuwaiti government to release the detainees and restore the constitutional life—which is

'How can a free election be held when the Ministry of Information's censors occupy all the offices of the newspapers and magazines?'

more important than the release." The international pressure and publicity that followed had an impact. All the detainees were released on bail on May 12. On May 20, the official Kuwaiti news agency announced that the Emir "ordered that all cases against those who were arrested recently, including former deputies, be closed and not used as part of their official record in the future." Not to be outdone, the former detainees wrote a tough letter to Kuwait's Crown Prince. Thanking him for the "nice gesture" of amnesty, they went on to point out that by dropping the charges "the one who escaped trial before the judiciary is the executive authority." The group enumerated the executive's violations of the law.

The last chapter in the tale is the June 10 election and boycott. In a front-page editorial the day before the polling, the pro-government newspaper *Al-Anba* declared, "Tomorrow comes our rendezvous with democracy. The democracy of legitimacy, not the democracy of leaflets, cassettes and illegal gatherings." Both sides claimed victory. The government implicitly declared the opposition's boycott a failure with the announcement that 63.4 percent of the electorate, or about 39,000 men, participated in the balloting. The Constitutional Movement contested the figure, terming it "shameless" and "surrounded by a lot of suspicion and question marks." It said that on Election Day some of its activists were ousted from polling places and others were arrested on suspicion of affiliation with the movement. Election monitors from the opposition said that by 7:30 P.M. a total of 25,163 men (41 percent of those eligible) had voted, according to the count of the Ministry of Justice and the elections department, but then "the number started to increase in a

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questionable way, in the last hour in particular," before most of the districts closed their doors at 8 o'clock.

After the election, thirty Kuwaiti notables who led the drive to boycott the election issued a strongly worded statement, repeating the call for the return of the National Assembly. They warned of "danger to the future and the stability of this homeland" and called on the authorities "to respond to the demands of the nation" and "respect the popular will." Calling the National Council "powerless" and "a waste of time," they said it could never be an alternative to the elected National Assembly.

The opposition also catalogued other grievances. The authorities ignored blatant vote buying: "Auctioneers stood in some electoral districts, buying and selling votes within the sight of policemen, arousing the people's anger and condemnation." Some voters went to the polls only to find that their names had already been used. Entry visas were denied to some foreign correspondents who sought to cover the election; the opposition accused the authorities of "selective invitation" of journalists. They also charged that the government used press censorship and a press campaign of "personal slander, abuses and insults" against its opponents. The opposition then posed perhaps its most provocative question: "How can a free election be held when the Ministry of Information's censors occupy all the offices of the newspapers and magazines, allow only opinions corresponding to the government's, and heap abuse on the holders of other opinions, without allowing them to even reply?"

Although Kuwaitis across the political spectrum have understandably rallied behind their ousted rulers to demand that Iraq leave Kuwait, the days of Kuwait's constitutional monarchy, at least in its current form, may be numbered. Unlike Iraq and Syria, where political opposition is brutally suppressed, and Saudi Arabia, where dissent is not tolerated, in Kuwait, progressives and democrats certainly had some political space. But the Emir clearly outmaneuvered the opposition with the elections in June, and the pro-democracy forces found themselves in a political cul-de-sac.

However, the democratic opposition is now beginning to break its uncritical post-invasion support of the Sabahs. A major issue involves family members' increasingly tight control over the estimated \$100 billion in government funds held in foreign assets and investments. Ahmad al-Khatib, a leading government critic who was among those arrested in May, said recently, "They are handling Kuwaiti investments as though they were the private property of the family, not the people's money."

As the Jidda conference made clear, another key issue now publicly aired is the country's future political framework. Even in the face of Iraq's continuing occupation, concerns that motivated thousands of Kuwaiti democrats and progressives clearly continue to resonate. As one senior Cabinet minister from a moderate Arab state observed the day after Iraqi tanks rolled across the border, "I am afraid that we may have to sacrifice Kuwait as we knew it, to get out of this one."

NATION REPRINTS

The American Neo-Nazi Movement Today

Elinor Langer's well-researched and chilling look at the growth of skin-head, neo-Nazi and white supremacist hate groups with direct ideological links to the original Nazi movement. Langer concludes that something deeply disturbing is indeed happening here—something every American should comprehend and confront. (July 16/23, 1990)

How on Earth?—Strategies For a Habitable Planet

The Nation's special Earth Day 1990 issue features bold articles by Barry Commoner and Kirkpatrick Sale outlining down-to-earth technological and political strategies for preserving the planet. Commoner argues that government regulation has failed to persuade American corporations to clean up their act, and Sale argues that Earth Day 1990 commemorated the problem, not the solution. "To succeed," according to the issue's lead editorial, "environmental politics needs a movement." The solutions offered here are radical, but so is the problem. (April 30, 1990)

'Fetal Rights'—A New Assault on Feminism

Katha Pollitt focuses on the anti-choice forces' new strategy: persecuting women who carry or give birth to drug dependent or alcoholic children. Pollitt tells how mothers are being portrayed "as the major threat to unborn babies." Already in wide demand for college textbooks and academic courses in many disciplines. (March 26, 1990)

Scapegoating the Black Family

Guest-edited and written by African-American women, this important Nation issue debunks the myths and exposes the reality of the black family. Margaret B. Wilkerson, Jewell Handy Gresham, Faye Wattleton and others. With a final appeal/challenge to America by speaker, activist and author Ossie Davis. This issue has received widespread attention in academic circles and was nominated for a National Magazine Award. (July 24/31, 1989)

The Lords of the Global Village

Mergers and takeovers are transforming the information business, creating companies worth billions of dollars and concentrating power and ownership in the hands of a few. Ben H. Bagdikian, author of *The Media Monopoly*, examines the growth of these giant communication combines, and profiles such media barons as Rupert Murdoch and Robert Maxwell. This special issue is essential to all students of the media, in or out of the classroom. (June 12, 1989)

Defending the Rain Forest and Its People

Alexander Cockburn and Susanna Hecht's powerful account of the destruction of the Amazon rain forests and the efforts to save them. Also, an inspirational interview with one of the most visible and vocal—and threatened—leaders of the Rubber Tappers Union, Osmaring Amancio Rodriguez. (May 22, 1989)

The Armenian Journal of Michael Arlen

Travel through earthquake-torn Armenia with Michael Arlen, author of *Passage to Ararat*. Meet the people of Yerevan, Leninakan, Spitak. See and hear their suffering and hope as they struggle to regain their history and forge their future. Compassionate and rich in detail. (April 24, 1989)

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Otherness Is in the Details

MICAELA DI LEONARDO

Sometimes I think that I will scream and start throwing things if I see one more sententious reference to the "alterity of the Other." Has there ever been a historical era characterized by as little radical analysis or activism and as much radical-chic writing as ours? Maandering on about Otherness, phallocentrism or Eurocentric tropes has become a lazy academic substitute for actual engagement with the detailed histories and contemporary realities of Western racial minorities, white women or any Third World population.

Otherness is in the details, in multiplicities of constructions and experiences. And anthropology, the premier historic clearinghouse of those details, has the dubious honor of "specializing" in the most *echt* Other, the Primitive. Each of the works under review positions itself differently with regard to anthropology's primitivist legacy, but each is left- and feminist-leaning and immerses itself in detailed examination of specific Western cultural constructions of Others. Interestingly, each is also a linked set of essays, a hallowed Victorian and now a post-modern genre.

Primate Visions is based on historian of science Donna Haraway's decade-long study of the (largely American and increasingly anthropological) study of monkeys and apes over the course of this century. Nonhuman primates, Haraway points out, were shifted to the position of "our primitive ancestors" at midcentury as rapid decolonization made the application of that Western label to small-scale "tribal" populations increasingly embarrassing. Thus "primatology is simian orientalism," and "the commercial and scientific traffic in monkeys and apes is a traffic in meanings, as well as in animal lives." Those constructions of nonhuman Others in the shifting Western "border zones" between nature and

culture reveal the evolution of capitalism and imperialism and the changing social fractures of race, class, gender and sexuality.

Haraway has done her homework. She grounds this theoretical stance on primatology's evolution in a series of minutely detailed case studies (some previously published) of individual researchers and their intellectual and institutional milieus.

IN THIS REVIEW

PRIMATE VISIONS: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science. *By Donna Haraway. Routledge. 486 pp. \$35. Paper \$19.95.*

GONE PRIMITIVE: Savage Intellects, Modern Lives. *By Marianna Torgovnick. University of Chicago Press. 328 pp. \$24.95.*

ANTHROPOLOGIES AND HISTORIES: Essays in Culture, History, and Political Economy. *By William Roseberry. Rutgers University Press. 278 pp. \$38. Paper \$14.*

BANANAS, BEACHES AND BASES: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics. *By Cynthia Enloe. University of California Press. 244 pp. \$35. Paper \$10.95.*

Most beautifully laid out is "Teddy Bear Patriarchy," the compelling tale of big-game hunter, museum diorama architect and taxidermist Carl Akeley. Haraway convincingly links Akeley's personal masculinist obsessions with stalking, killing and "recreating" African wild game, particularly the huge male silverback gorilla "Karisimbi," to Progressive Era elites' concerns with imperial conquest abroad and the domestic control of the working class:

Roosevelt is the perfect *locus genii* for the Museum's task of regeneration of a miscellaneous, incoherent urban public threatened with genetic and social decadence, threatened with the prolific bodies of the new immigrants, threatened with the failure of manhood.

Haraway ransacks American Museum of Natural History archives, plumbs the au-

tobiographies of Akeley's two wives, "reads" the rooms of the contemporary Museum and makes lavish use of secondary historical sources to construct a not-unfamiliar cultural and political-economic portrait of an age—a portrait that is, however, uniquely wrapped around the body of a giant stuffed ape. And this is Haraway's overarching point throughout *Primate Visions*: the centrality of scientific/popular interpretations of monkey and ape "nature" to Western, particularly American, ideologies of nature, culture, race, gender—civilization. Despite changing interpretations, "a constant dimension" of primate knowledge "has been the naturalization of human history."

Haraway traces the threads of this naturalization from Progressive Era masculine imperialism to postmodern "late capitalist bio-politics," in which sociobiological primatologists theorize primates as reproductively strategizing actors, "model yuppies." Along the way—and a tortuously long way it is, roughly 750 pages in an average-format book—she not only looks in on all the key American and British primate researchers but also offers contrasting chapters on independent Japanese and Indian primate studies. Haraway interprets Robert Yerkes, the Yale biologist and founder of scientific primate laboratory colonies, as the paradigmatic pre-World War II human engineer who "assumed rational control of nature so as to manage society for conscious production and reproduction. Engineering properly replaced inefficient culture." This "colonizing logic of paternalistic domination" modeled human primates anew. No longer emblems of wild masculine nature to be killed, feminized and fixed in photos and museum displays, monkeys and apes became simultaneously models of "adaptivity"—human evolution—and of "natural" human differences of sex, race and class that the modern bureaucratic state should manage through scientific evaluation for population and employment control. It was specifically in this post-suffrage, prewar era that "primatology served as mediator between life and human sciences in a critical period of reformulation of doctrines of nature and culture." And in an era in which "it would be difficult to overstate the interest in dominance as a physiological, psychological and social principle in human and life sciences," studies of "natural"

Micaela di Leonardo recently edited Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era (forthcoming, California) and is currently engaged in field research (with Adolph Reed) among working-class black Americans in New Haven, Connecticut. She teaches at Yale University.

male dominance in primate laboratory colonies crystallized a newly secularized vision of male-dominant family groups as central to functional integration of society—read corporate capitalism. Haraway's accounts of C.R. Carpenter's and S.A. Altmann's later semiotic and cybernetic additions to this model make chilling reading. She notes the wartime stamp on "a vision that theorizes communication—especially language—as a remote control system": "The historical contingencies of capitalist patriarchy have meant, most starkly, that biology can be a war baby and like to play with guns."

Haraway's treatment of the postwar Jane Goodall (and others) African field study phenomenon notes the concatenation of decolonization, Western imperial guilt and cold war nuclear terror—and the sudden public relations appearance of young blond women embracing hairy black apes in otherwise mysteriously empty African jungle landscapes. The bloody history of Western colonization is erased; newly independent Africans are erased. Instead we perceive the magic of interspecific communication "precisely to renaturalize 'man' in the context of decolonization and the Cold War's nuclear culture."

It is a measure of Haraway's simultaneous command of cultural studies, political economy and science history that she appreciates equally *National Geographic's* cold war vision and specific use of Goodall and other field primatologists; Gulf Oil's appropriation of the famous Adamic photograph of Goodall's and a chimp's hand clasping (which appears on Haraway's cover) for its own corporate image-cleansing ends; and the key role of long-term primate field studies in dethroning "the monkey," lab science's "natural-technical object of knowledge" working as "the basis and product of a kind of materials engineering." The advance of knowledge and venal corporate exploitation were co-terminous. Neither erases the other.

Throughout *Primate Visions*, in fact, Haraway periodically and endearingly pops up in the persona of the pissed-off radical accountant, finger on the balance sheet and green-shaded eye on corporate capitalism's extraction of profits from the bodies of monkeys, apes and humans. She charts capital flows from foundations, corporate and federal sources and never forgets to put Marx's classical maxim—*cui bono?*—to the test.

Sometimes, however, paradigm shifts are related to political-economic shifts in

The Unbreakable Thread



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highly mediated ways. One such example is the 1960s "Man the Hunter" model spearheaded by Sherwood Washburn of the University of California, Berkeley, and imbibed as holy writ by generations of college students and the population at large. Haraway notes the postwar humanism of Washburn and his colleagues: They explicitly sought to secure anti-racism within their science, to build a "therapeutic physical anthropology enmeshed in the discursive politics authorizing universal man." But the structure of Washburn's liberal vision of human evolution—speciation early, riation late, universal functional social institutions—also enshrined gender essentialism and its entailed legitimization of the

Haraway points to the irredeemably bourgeois vision of feminist sociobiology—baboons with briefcases, dressed for success.

sexual status quo, just in time for rising feminist anthropology to contest it. Haraway asserts that Man the Hunter, with its emphasis on primal, hierarchical small-group functioning, served as "liberal democracy's substitute for socialism's version of natural human cooperation." It also functioned, I might add, as yet another showcase "proof" of American antiracism to a nonaligned Third World skeptical of United States racial policy.

Haraway attends carefully, as one might expect, to the 1970s feminists contesting Man the Hunter and follows both female and feminist primatologists (overlapping but not identical groups) into the present. Surprisingly, however, she offers an original and ironic interpretation of the rise of feminist sociobiology. While she notes the indubitable sexism of the 1970s texts of E.O. Wilson and other sociobiologists, she also points to the irredeemably bourgeois vision of feminist sociobiology ("baboons with briefcases rather than langurs in lipstick, dressed for success and power lunching on the savanna," writes physical anthropologist Susan Sperling). But Haraway also declares that sociobiology's postmodern

dissolution of the subject into gene pools offered a gendered way out of the structural stranglehold of Washburnian physical anthropology:

Females are redeployed semiotically within a strategic investment discourse, where mind, sex and economy collapse into a single, highly problematic figure—the hyper-real unit of selection. . . . "sisterhood" is powerful; it is a question of coefficients of relatedness and the terms of economic survival.

In fact, Haraway's take on the many strands of contemporary feminism is refreshingly acute. She brilliantly uses an explication of autonomous Japanese primatology's empathetic holism—in conjunction with its obvious sexism—to devastate ongoing cultural feminist (and black cultural nationalist) claims for superior organicist women's (or black, Native American, etc.) ways of knowing:

Holism . . . presence of "matriarchal" myth systems . . . cultivation of emotional and cognitive connection between humans and animals, absence of dualist splits in objects of knowledge . . . are all perfectly compatible with masculinism in epistemology and male dominance in politics . . . not to mention the sordid history of organicism and rejection of "dualism" in explicitly racist, fascist twentieth-century movements.

What flaw could mar this paragon? Well, even Haraway nods. Her stitches—the thin filler chapters that link together her thick descriptions chronologically—show up against the book's fabric. Her introduction is dull, vague and overly abstract; she repeats herself too much and has continuity problems (the 1975 Gombe kidnapping is mentioned several times, over hundreds of pages, before it is explained). In fact, while *Primate Visions* is appropriately very big, it could benefit from a 100-page loss of redundancy and under-researched topics.

More substantively, while Haraway claims to make fruitful use of but avoid succumbing to the "four temptations" (where's Eddie Kendricks?)—poststructuralism, Marxism, realism and feminism/antiracism—in the end, she sometimes sits down to dinner with poststructuralism and feminism/antiracism, leaving Marxism and realism outside with their noses pressed up against the glass. How? First of all, Haraway periodically ignores the Gramscian injunction to take oppositional ideologies into account when analyzing hegemony. Her elegant

account of Teddy Bear Patriarchy, for example, scants acknowledgment that the same Progressive Era Museum of Natural History that was the site of Akeley's dioramas was also Columbia University anthropologist Franz Boas's (and later Margaret Mead's) home base—and thus a fount of explicitly antiracist, cultural relativist texts and lectures. Sherry Washburn's liberalism did not spring full-grown from the 1951 Unesco statement on race.

Second, Haraway is inconsistent in applying scientific tests of verifiability, finding it more and more difficult to judge primatologists the closer she comes to the present—and to the individuals she interviewed for her last chapters. She hides behind the poststructural smoke-screen, in fact, to avoid a final negative evaluation of Sarah Hrdy's feminist sociobiology:

It would be too easy to argue that Hrdy's origin stories once again reify gender outside of history . . . but that argument fails to take seriously the craft of constrained story-telling intrinsic to biological sciences and simply assumes there is some safer place for narrative, called "inside" history, "outside" nature.

But as Haraway writes elsewhere, standing up to her poststructuralist colleagues, "one story is not as good as another."

Finally, Haraway is at some points overly reliant on precisely the brands of poststructuralist and psychoanalytic feminist thought and language that she criticizes elsewhere in the text, and this reliance plays havoc with her normally clear and vivid prose. A very unconvincing section interpreting sadism concludes, "It is the forceps of the children of the mind and the eye." Right, and I'm a monkey's aunt.

Nonetheless, *Primate Visions* is a genuine tour de force, uniquely combining intellectual history and the sociology of knowledge. It contains enough sheer insight and represents enough hard historical digging to fuel several scholarly careers. We leave the text genuinely enlightened on the changing boundaries between nature and culture, and on our own historical trafficking in these myriad forms of otherness.

Marianna Torgovnick's *Gone Primitive*, a literary critic's exploration of "primitivism" as a modernist trope (in analogy to Edward Said's "Orientalism"), lacks Haraway's limitations. *Gone Primitive* is reasonably sized and vividly

and consistently readable. Torgovnick, unfortunately, also lacks Haraway's virtues: She *hasn't* done her homework. She substitutes lots of delightful but largely unwarranted readings of texts and graphics and much armchair speculation for thorough knowledge of anthropological, Third World state and small-scale population histories.

Torgovnick's goal, a narrative of the "genealogy of thinkers" who perpetuated "ideas about primitive life," is laudable. Her efforts to criticize recent humanist "arrogant postmodern glee" for its refusal to attend to "the real social and economic cost of the global village" are valuable, particularly given their rarity in current literary criticism. Her attempts to bring gender analysis to bear on primitivist discourse are salutary, and are one-up on gender-blind Said and many of the postmodern anthropologists from whom she otherwise borrows. Her interpretations of the shifting meanings and wildly enhanced monetary value of primitive art are particularly acute, and are an advance on James Clifford's work on this topic. And her desire to range across ethnography and popular and high culture is certainly proper, if hardly unique in this era of burgeoning cultural studies.

But Torgovnick sets about reaching her goal by the lucky-dip method: a couple of anthropologists here, some explorers there, two writers, an art historian and a museum director, wrap it all up with Tarzan and once-over-lightly for Freud, and call it a day—and a book. Some selection is of course necessary, if we are not to spend decades on tomes like *Primate Visions*. But cogent justification of one's choices is equally necessary, and this Torgovnick does not provide. Why Freud and not Marx? Margaret Mead but not Ruth Benedict? D.H. Lawrence and Conrad but not Melville or Hemingway? Tarzan but not cave-man cartoons? Where Haraway perhaps fills in small gaps in her intellectual-historical edifice too diligently and unnecessarily, Torgovnick doesn't even supply the building materials. She ignores chronology—hinging, for example, an argument about Malinowski's sexism (which was real enough) on the cover design for a 1968 edition of *The Sexual Life of Savages*. Malinowski died in 1942, a small point Torgovnick rather disingenuously admits in a footnote. Sexism and the ways in which sexism intertwines with constructions of the primitive are historically contingent—they vary in form across time. It is precisely this shifting reality that Haraway takes

care to describe. Torgovnick's broad brushstrokes miss a meaningfully variegated reality. She also reads carelessly, declaring, for example, that Margaret Mead repressed discussion of lesbianism in *Coming of Age in Samoa*: "In 1928, Mead, perhaps prudently, avoided any explicit reference to what was then an unmentionable topic." Torgovnick is too taken up with Mead's daughter Catherine Bateson's revelations of her mother's bisexual experiences to read the text at hand. Progressive Era Fabian that she was, Mead explicitly declares in *Coming of Age* that "homosexuality" (and mas-

turbation and unusual forms of heterosexuality) was "neither banned nor institutionalized" in Samoa and thus "a satisfactory sex adjustment in marriage can always be established." Using the Other for heavy-handed sexual/social engineering—a favorite Mead ploy—is not the same as the self-censorship Torgovnick claims.

These are quibbles, though, in comparison with Torgovnick's key lacunas. First, she focuses on *fin-de-siècle* Europe and the United States with little sense of the nineteenth-century theoretical and popular debates—especially in anthro-

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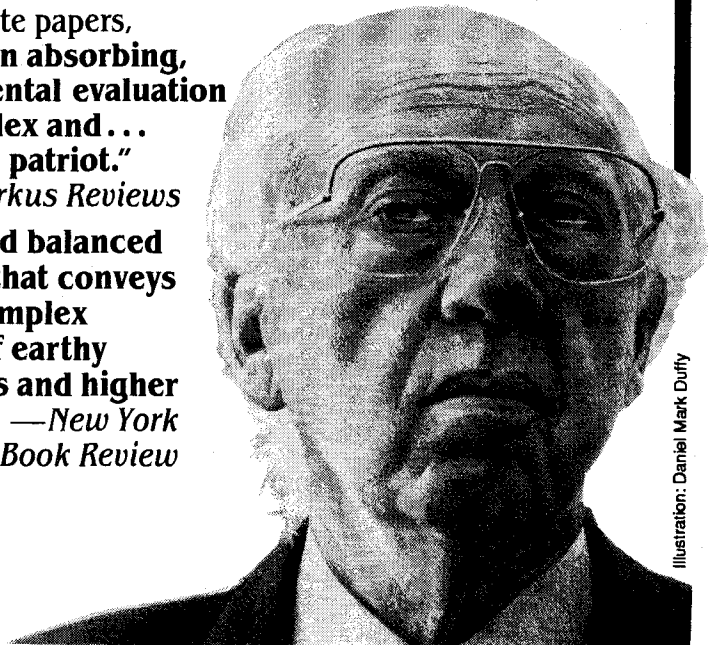


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pology—that bequeathed to the twentieth century specific constructions of primitive and nonprimitive Others based on gender, class and race. (She lists George Stocking's *Victorian Anthropology* in her references but makes no apparent use of it.) If Torgovnick wishes to evaluate Freud's primitivism—and what an interesting idea that is—she should take the time to read the theorists upon whom he based his constructions. Not doing so is akin to trying to consider the heritage of Western literary criticism with no knowledge of Matthew Arnold or the classical curriculum.

Relatedly, Torgovnick, while pressing feminist analyses, has read almost nothing of twenty years of feminist anthropological research and theory. Haraway's "Teddy Bear Patriarchy," clearly highly relevant to her task, came out as an article in 1984, and how did she miss the brilliant anthology *Nature, Culture and Gender*, now a decade old and surely not obscure, given its Cambridge University Press imprint? Doing some reading would have saved her from embarrassingly ethnocentric—primitivist—declarations such as "primitives seem to Westerners more content with their assigned gender roles than many in the West do." For heaven's sake, which "primitives"? I thought we were deconstructing here. We've got decades of ethnographic work documenting the variety of gender relations—and women's statements about same—in small-scale societies. But Torgovnick ends the search with Margaret Mead's pronouncements in 1949. Real immersion in anthropological work on even a few contemporary small-scale populations would have lent historical perspective and political-economic gravitas to Torgovnick's investigation.

Second, Torgovnick misses the boat on the upside of primitivism: noble-savage ideology, a constant thread throughout the century and dreadfully apparent in much contemporary cultural feminist mixing of all women with a heady stew of Third World Others, as Haraway notes. "Nasty savage" masculinist primitivism is a real and shifting phenomenon (consider the demonization of our former ally Saddam Hussein), but it has been analyzed ad nauseam by feminist anthropologists and historians. Torgovnick, who casually mentions her own youthful flirtations with noble-savage primitivism, could have contributed much by seriously analyzing its sources and contemporary emanations.

Finally, even from within literary crit-

icism Torgovnick begs many questions. Her reading, for example, of the Tarzan phenomenon as an imperial male romance is extremely compelling, very much in the vein of Ariel Dorfman's work on Disney comics. But if she wishes us to believe that Westerners take in Tarzan transparently, she needs to do better than to report scattered reactions of friends and kin. Where is all that literary theory on intertextuality and the responding, resisting reader when we get down to the brass tacks of practice? Clarita Reed, for example, a black college reading teacher (and my mother-in-law, if we're going to deal with kin) has a deeply camp appreciation of Tarzan. She watches the TV reruns as absurdist plays and exclaimed, with fine irony, "Last free man!" as she took the wrapping off her Christmas gift book. Professor Torgovnick, meet a resisting reader.

In the end, then, Torgovnick takes on too much with too little background. At one point, in tried and true poststructuralist fashion, she asserts that "everything is political, or nothing is." We may appreciate her determination to assert a political reckoning against her more frivolous colleagues, but its sweeping form simply begs more questions. Surely there are degrees, and degrees are important. Collecting bubble-gum wrappers may have a political dimension, but one neither so clear nor so great as working in a rape crisis center. Primitivism, like the primitive, is in the details, and thus the very subject of *Gone Primitive* is absent.

What is all this anthropological work that Torgovnick should have read? Why does it matter? The curious reader could do no better than to pick up William Roseberry's *Anthropologies and Histories*, a deceptively slight set of elegantly written essays on the converging histories of the two disciplines. Torgovnick claims in passing that leftist writers "often invoke an idealized vision of the primitive as a precapitalist social and economic model," but she cites only post-modernist sources. Roseberry is the real gen, an anthropologist with extensive Latin American field experience and an impressive scholarly grasp of the histories of anthropology and Marxist theory, and he has been publishing Marxist critiques of romantic leftism and nonromantic Marxist anthropological studies for more than a decade. Moreover, Roseberry, as a Latin Americanist, knows well that we cannot understand Western primitivism unless we also grasp the history of West-

ern peasantry—metropolitan ways of conceiving the lives and thoughts of the agrarian bulk of the world's population. (Torgovnick notes her youthful "primitivist" acquisitions of Mexican pottery and Central American and Peruvian clothing, but these were actually of peasant manufacture.) We have inherited and continue to employ notions of peasants as half-primitives, and we project upon them cherished hopes and desperate fears.

Roseberry deconstructs primitivism/peasantism through deeply historical Marxist analyses of real populations and state formations. In "Images of the Peasant in the Consciousness of the Venezuelan Proletariat" he paints a nuanced portrait of a peasantry with shallow historical roots (an oxymoron in Western myth) and a nation-state with a complicated historical memory. He refutes "moral economy" theorists, who posit timeless peasantries automatically resisting colonial and capitalist encroachments, and who "analyze a relatively unambiguous transition from an ordered past to a disordered present." We need instead, Roseberry asserts, to "view a movement from a disordered past to a disordered present." In Venezuela, middle classes have invented a traditional

peasant past upon which to base a new nationalism: "The countryside, purged of its own history, comes to represent the true Venezuela."

One of the most refreshing elements of Roseberry's narrative is his refusal to rule himself and us out of court as subject to social analysis. That is, not only does he consider the activities of Latin American peasants and bourgeoisies as part of ongoing political-economic shifts, he considers those of our own. Leftist Americans who become politically involved in Latin American politics, for example, are as much a part of the internationalization of capital and labor as are *maquiladoras* and death squads: "When we think of an Americanized politics, then, we should not think solely of the State Department's sycophants."

In Haraway's terms, Roseberry also attends to the four temptations, but he never leaves Marx (or Karl Popper) outside looking in. Marx is always at Roseberry's table, although more often than not Roseberry engages him in furious debate. One of the key arguments of *Anthropologies and Histories* is that "within too many understandings of political economy . . . when we come to consider culture and politics, we enclose pro-

foundly contradictory social experiences within unproblematic and simplistic class or epochal labels." But many anthropologists and others who complain about reductionist materialisms choose instead various idealisms. A second key task of the book is a careful critique of the flawed cultural and historical visions of major idealist anthropologists Clifford Geertz and Marshall Sahlins. One might expect such writing to be the sort of stuff through which only graduate students under duress would slog. But consider this lucid passage from Roseberry's commentary on Geertz:

Some might think that to refer to culture and power is to reduce culture to power, to treat values as "glosses on property relations" or to "run on about the exploitation of the masses" [both quotations from Geertz]. But there are reductions, and then there are reductions. And the denial of such connections is but one of many classical reductions in American anthropology.

There is much more in *Anthropologies and Histories*: an analysis of early Russian and Soviet writings on peasant life that would later provide the frame for Western peasant studies; a fascinating account of the trendy rise and acrimoni-

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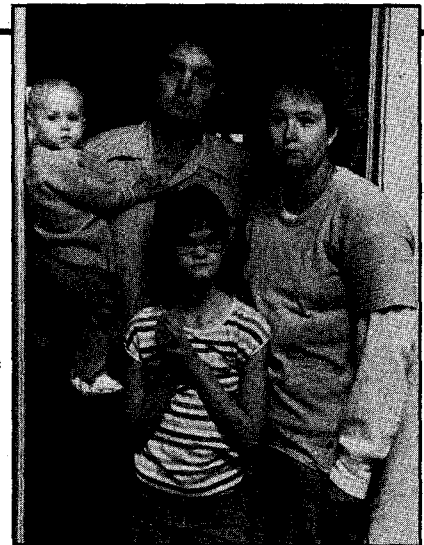
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ous fall of Marxist structuralist mode-of-production analysis and an attempt to scavenge useful insights from its discarded carcass; respectful but critical readings of Eric Wolf's *Europe and the People Without History* and E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* that then tie into Roseberry's larger plea for agentive, historical analyses of cultural/political-economic processes. However, to return to Haraway's temptations, Roseberry spends little time in company with feminism and antiracism. This is not to say that he is anything but scrupulous in his use of language (and he notices sexism in Geertz). But he does not consider gender and race as analytic categories in their own right on the same level as class. This is a sensitive point: I do not wish it confused with either the common reviewer's pique that the book at hand is not the one she wishes were written, or with the ubiquitous radical-chic checklist of "voices" to be heard.

In an era in which materialist and idealist feminists are at each other's throats, it is refreshing to see Enloe calmly going about her business.

My argument is instead that inclusion of gender and race/ethnic analysis in looking at the constructions of, say, Mexican nationalism would foreground the key figures of El Indio and La Malinche (the legendary Aztec woman who slept with Cortez) along with varying notions of correct revolutionary peasantry. And we would be the richer in understanding. We cannot really grasp the internationalization of capital and labor without considering differentially gendered and raced work forces and migrant streams—bodies on the ground—and the highly gendered and raced constructions of those processes articulated by varying social actors.

Cynthia Enloe makes precisely these points in *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*. Enloe is a political scientist and recently the author of *Does Khaki Become You?*, an interdisciplinary study of the

inherently gendered nature of military functioning and military ideologies. In *Bananas*, Enloe uses these insights as well as the results of her more recent work on gender, race and military action in Central America and the Philippines to construct an account of the key importance of gender in international politics. Originally published by Pandora Press in the U.K., *Bananas* is unabashedly intended for a popular audience. In eight substantive chapters, Enloe interprets specific institutions (often but not always linked to women's labor) as gendered political-economic and cultural processes. International tourism, nationalism, military bases, diplomatic wives, domestic servants, classic banana-republic economies and new capitalist industrial outsourcing all receive the Enloe treatment. Pervading the whole is an insistence on the centrality of Western cultural constructions of Third World female Others. The tourism chapter, for example, begins with a sympathetic account of intrepid Western women explorers, moves through the political economy of the contemporary global tourism business and its reliance on sex-saturated images of exotic femininity and ends with a fact-filled account of the burgeoning industry of Southeast Asian sex tourism—and native feminist movements fighting it. The banana-republic chapter offers a detailed history of the career of Carmen Miranda, the Brazilian singer turned Hollywood star and source of United Fruit's biggest advertising coup, a

half-banana, half-woman cartoon character destined to rival Donald Duck. Dressed as a Miranda-esque market woman, this feminized banana sang her calypso song from coast to coast. Chiquita Banana helped to establish a twentieth-century art form, the singing commercial. One could hear her singing the praises of the banana on the radio 376 times daily.

Enloe moves from the use of the exotic female Other to sell fruit to the historical economic structure of banana plantations, to the cultural sleight of hand that disguises women farm workers as farmers' wives and thus erases their labor.

Enloe is particularly good at deconstructing the category "woman," not only noting divisions between Western and Third World women and among Western women by race and class but also stressing class divisions within Third World female populations and divisions on issues of sexual preference. For those of us with some background in Marxist-feminist

politics, cultural studies and international political economy, however, most of those considerations are not particularly new. But that is not the point. *Bananas* is a synthetic account of hundreds of pieces of research, somewhat on the order of Estelle Freedman and John D'Emilio's synthesis of historical research on sexuality in *Intimate Matters*. In an era in which materialist and idealist feminists are at each other's throats, Enloe calmly going about her business of assuming the unity of culture and political economy is a refreshing sight.

The bone I have to pick with Enloe is of a different order, and has to do with rhetorical and pedagogical strategy. In constructing a volume meant to be as popular as possible—and I think Enloe had your basic feminist bookstore denizen in mind—she takes a very high road. She attempts to lead the reader from some sort of gut-level feminism to an empirically based Marxist-feminist politics—without ever admitting it. *Bananas* is entirely reliant on Marxist theory and research. Feminism alone—whether in its current liberal or cultural varieties—cannot get past first base in analyzing export-processing zones, the political economy of sex tourism or labor relations in plantation economies. (Neither can Marxism alone—my criticism of Roseberry.) Enloe knows this, of course; she simply doesn't tell her reader. I think she should—not just on the principle of giving credit where credit is due and not just because we are living through an appalling reign of lies about the "failure" of Marxist analysis. Let me put it symbolically: Enloe's readers, the majority of whom will probably be college students in feminist courses (I am currently assigning her), not feminist bookstore walk-ins, will not be led from her text to Roseberry and Haraway. Enloe may not care about that. She is fundamentally concerned with galvanizing activism, not scholarship. But activists for whom Marxism is an Other—here or in Central Europe and the Soviet Union—are not supplied with the proper tools to do effective work. One of *Bananas*'s nicest features is Enloe's insistent reference to Third World women's movements working on each iniquity she outlines. These groups, though, actually exist in complicated relation to native leftist movements, and Roseberry can help us see all of them, and ourselves, in global political-economic context. Then Haraway can point out how our heritage of primate visions makes monkeys of us all. □

FILMS.

STUART KLAWANS

The assembly of the halfhearted may now adjourn. After months of Yes, buts and Well, maybes, of mumbled praise and endorsements ending with a shrug, we finally have an American film that can be called flat-out wonderful. *To Sleep With Anger*, the latest film written and directed by Charles Burnett, is droll, visionary, alarming, ironic and deeply moving, all at the same time—and so far, I'm talking only about the images under the opening credits.

Imagine a powerfully built, middle-aged black man, somewhat gone to fat, dressed in a suit that looks too flashy for churchgoing but too cheap for high times. He sits in a room that's bare except for an old photograph on the wall and a bowl of fruit on the table. A fire burns in the bowl. While Sister Rosetta Tharpe sings "Precious Memories" on the soundtrack, while the man twiddles his thumbs and nods and dozes, the fire spreads, burning everything, consuming nothing.

This is Gideon (Paul Butler), who now resides in Los Angeles but has deep roots in the South. He's a man who has set his house in order, and with such a firm hand that to this day his son Sam (Richard Brooks) can't get anyone to call him by name. Although Sam is himself a homeowner and father, he is still known to everyone, including his wife, as Babe Brother.

Into this setting of old-fashioned warmth, intimacy and stifling virtue steps Harry (Danny Glover), a friend from back home. Of course Gideon and his wife (Mary Alice) invite him to stay—and so they open their door to everything they have tried for years to shut out. For all his charm and exaggerated courtesy, Harry turns out to be the embodiment of corn liquor and hot music, of knife fights and whoring and gambling with marked cards. He is, above all, the spirit of suppressed rage, focused on white people but directed against safer targets, closer to hand.

What's wonderful about all this—flat-out wonderful—is the lightness of touch with which Burnett transforms his naturalistic characters and setting into the stuff of fable. The plot proceeds as if by sympathetic magic, until it reaches a moment of bloodletting during a thunderstorm,

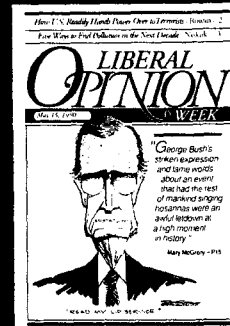
under a full moon; but all the while, every turn of phrase in the dialogue, every teacup in the decor, brings with it the delight of recognition. On the side of realism, *To Sleep With Anger* offers as thick a slice of African-American life as anybody has put on the screen, ever. On the side of the supernatural, it has Danny Glover, who can barely contain his joy in the role Burnett has written for him.

Since this column must revert in a moment to the mode of Yes, but, let me linger just enough to note a second great pleasure of *To Sleep With Anger*. Besides being a thoroughly good movie, it is a breakthrough for Burnett, who has spent some twenty years on the film-festival circuit. All that time, he suffered for want of an adequate budget and a cast capable of realizing his ideas; and even now, with those conditions satisfied, he has found a distributor only after the industry delayed unconscionably. That's why, at the end of *To Sleep With Anger*, I felt a triple sense of relief. Gideon's family had been exorcised; I had been allowed an entire film's worth of pure enjoyment; and Charles Burnett, an artist of immense talent, had just possibly been freed at last.

For a month now, the most frequently asked question among filmoids has been, Which gangster movie do you like? Meanwhile, the rest of the population worries about war. And yet *GoodFellas*, *Miller's Crossing* and *King of New York* might provide as fitting a context as any other for viewing the present military crisis. First the United States asserts the need to send troops to a client state; then it goes around demanding payment for its services. Has our military policy ever looked more like a protection racket?

Martin Scorsese's *GoodFellas* is probably the best of the gangster pictures now in the theaters, not least because it encourages such leaps of metaphor. Starting from the recollections of Brooklyn mobster Henry Hill, *GoodFellas* expands outward until it bursts the limits of its form. Like every story told in voiceover, it implies an address to the viewer. But only a filmmaker with Scorsese's nerve would take that implication to its logical conclusion, ending with an eye-to-eye confrontation between narrator and audience. The character we've watched suddenly turns to watch us; the day-to-day business of the Mafia, which we've been observing for a thrill, turns out to be part of our own daily business.

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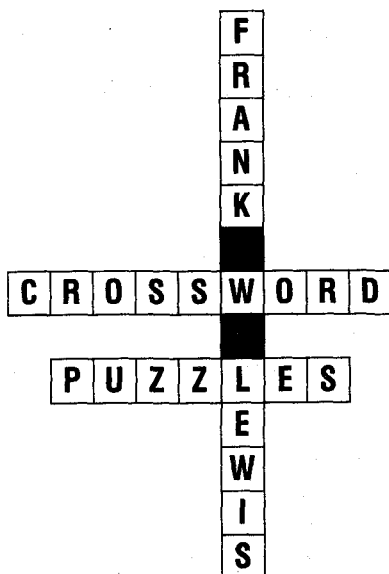
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The strategy is nervy but it's also poised—however strange that word sounds for a film of such violence. In recounting Hill's long career in the mob, from teenaged gofer to middle-aged dope peddler and thief, *GoodFellas* balances between complicity with the character (which is strongest in the many point-of-view sequences) and a face-off with him, as at the end. Camera movements weigh against occasional freeze-frames; Hill's voiceover weighs against his wife Karen's. (Alone among current gangster pictures, *GoodFellas* lets a woman speak.) Even the tones of voice sound curiously poised. Having married into the Mafia, Karen Hill describes its milieu as both an insider and an outsider. But then, so does the half Sicilian, half Irish Hill, who says of the worst bloodletting, "Among the Italians, it was real greaseball shit." Characteristically, Scorsese manages to be both brutally physical and coldly rational, to take the viewer inside the character's skin and yet stand at a distance. Perhaps, though, the balance is a bit *too* expert.

For the most part, *GoodFellas* shows us a great filmmaker doing what he already knows how to do. There's a sense of mastery but not of discovery—except, of course, for one long, extraordinary sequence, in which federal agents finally end Hill's career. At that point, you can feel Scorsese daring himself to go further, to put together the elements in a new way so that everything he does becomes expressive. What's brilliant is that the climax of this long sequence is its only moment of stasis. Hill stops and the camera stops—both of them literally arrested—and you understand, without a word being spoken, how this moment must have come as a relief to the frazzled mobster.

Apart from that sequence, though, Scorsese seems to be on territory he knows too well. Ray Liotta, who has been impressive in the past in character parts, doesn't really leave his mark on the role of Hill—he's too much the gangster-next-door to sustain interest over such a long film; and Lorraine Bracco, as Karen Hill, seems more than ever a stand-in for Debra Winger. Robert De Niro has been cast more for his name than his talent; his role might have been played by anybody. So the picture falls into the hands of the person who's most consistently energetic, in this case Joe Pesci. His performance as Tommy DeVito is unforgettable—surely no one has laughed and killed so unnervingly since Richard Widmark—and yet it warps the movie.

To come back to the original question, then: I like *GoodFellas* very much, but not to the exclusion of the other gangster pictures. *Miller's Crossing*, by Joel and Ethan Coen, provides the strong lead that *GoodFellas* lacks, in the Irish-born actor Gabriel Byrne. *King of New York*, though the least considerable of the three, carries the greatest sense of conviction, since its director, Abel Ferrara, is hellbent on filling the screen with picturesque carnage.

Based in spirit as well as language on the corrupt-town fictions of Dashiell Hammett, *Miller's Crossing* proposes, much as *GoodFellas* does, that gangsterism is a normal part of American life. Not that the Coen brothers take that theme to heart. As in *Blood Simple* and *Raising Arizona*, they come before us with the air of kids who have decided it would be really neat to make a movie. Last time, it was a screwball couple with a baby; this time, it's guys with machine guns. But if the Coens are playing with us, at least they play fair. Having chosen their genre, they faithfully adhere to its rules, including the ones that allow characters to come alive.

As Tom, the deputy boss of a Prohibition-era city, Gabriel Byrne delivers a cagey, understated performance, sometimes bringing out his character's force of will but mostly laying back, watching the people around him and playing off of their tics. Tom is trying to piece together a scheme from one minute to the next; and part of the fun of *Miller's Crossing* is that you get to watch him improvise. In very few recent films has a character thought so much about what everyone else was thinking. Albert Finney plays the boss, who mostly works on gut instinct; Jon Polito plays an upstart gangster whose fatal flaw is an inability to wrap his mind around the concept of disloyalty; John Turturro is a petty crook who specializes in being more brazen than anyone can credit; and Marcia Gay Harden is the all-purpose girlfriend, who unfortunately doesn't think or do much at all. *Miller's Crossing* could have used a stronger female character, or two or three. But within the limits it sets for itself, the film manages to entertain and even suggest some of the perverse moralism of its models. However much they're out for fun, the Coens have abandoned their visual antics this time, adopting a style that might not achieve gravity but at least does a good job of mimicking it.

As for *King of New York*, it doesn't have a single idea in its pretty little head,

except perhaps for the fantasy that a white man—Christopher Walken—can be tough enough to lead a gang of jiving, rapping blacks and Latinos. Even the character's name is White. Released from a term in Sing Sing, he reasserts his presence in the city by unleashing outbursts of violence, each striking with metronomic regularity, each louder than the last. The mayhem abates only long enough for White to present himself as a benefactor of New York's poor, in a sequence that's a delicious sendup of gossip-page philanthropy.

Of course, *King of New York* isn't really about that. It's about inventing new and better ways to photograph shoot-outs. But as George Bush, the scourge of Noriega, prepares to send troops into battle against another former client, I can't help but feel some respect for this story about a light-skinned drug lord killing off his darker rivals in the name of charity. I watch *Miller's Crossing* and think of the chaos let loose as the powerful blunder from deceit to deceit. I consider *GoodFellas*, with its encapsulation of a quarter-century of American life, and feel as if I'm observing a car wreck from the point of view of the passenger seat.

Think of Barry Levinson's *Avalon* as a *shietl*-to-suburbs film and you probably won't want to think about it at all. It's not just that the story has been told a thousand times before but that so many of those tellings have been specific and surprising, as *Avalon* is not. Here, a standard-issue grandfather recounts his coming to America to a generic grandson; only in this case, the family settles not in New York's Lower East Side but in Baltimore. So what?

That's a good question, especially since Baltimore itself lacks the character Levinson gave it in *Diner* and *Tin Men*. Those films had the power to lift you out of yourself for a couple of hours. *Avalon* leaves you sunk in your seat, waiting for the film to get to the point. So if a case can be made for the picture, it has to begin with a warning: *Avalon* is not so much an experience as an object of contemplation. Levinson's risk in making it was that he left the meaning unsettled until the final frames. Your risk in going to see it is that you might give up on the picture well before you reach that revelation.

At the beginning, though, you're likely to feel enchanted. A young man in old-fashioned clothes emerges from a

black void, walking straight toward the camera in jerky, dreamlike motion. His eyes are alight with wonder; the blackness above him is alight with fireworks. On the soundtrack, you hear the voice of Sam Krichinsky (Armin Mueller-Stahl): "I came to America in 1914. . . . It was the most beautiful place you've ever seen."

Too beautiful, as it happens. The joke on Sam is that, having come off the boat on Independence Day, he thinks the festivities are part of daily life in the new country. The joke on the viewer is that,

given an opening sequence of almost overbearing charm, you expect the film to sustain that mood. Instead, *Avalon* begins to saunter, as if at random, through scenes from the lives of the next generation: Sam's son, Jules (Aidan Quinn); his daughter-in-law, Ann (Elizabeth Perkins); and his grandson, Michael (Elijah Wood). The theme of their lives, throughout the 1940s and '50s, is the acquisition of money, in ever greater amounts. Jules and Ann never lose touch with Sam or treat him with anything less than

POEM FOR MY FATHER AT 85 AFTER CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING WITH MY NEPHEW, MARLON, AGE 7

It is as the Good Book says: *he whom the gods love, they correct*, so, amid spruce, fir, and pine dusted with snow, we set out, he in his blue down suit and the fiberfill gloves I bought him for Christmas, I in my dark blue vest and red hat, pushing off like two birds into the hills, gliding up and down the deeply grooved tracks the others have left for us, as I call out to him: *Suis-moi, mon ami*, and he follows, imitating me, and I am part ache, part happiness as he glides with such perfect, self-congratulatory delight, down the hill after me, and two beautiful women turn in their tracks to watch, thinking I am his father, loving the brisk, initiatory glee of it: this young boy following an older man like an imprinted duck, waving his arms wildly into the air, bending his knees, as I fill the white, wintry woods with applause, calling out, *Très bon, Marlon, magnifique! Champion!* Then his cheeks grow pink with contentment and cold, as we stop at a stump bathed in a tent of clear light, where I help him off with his skis and we share a banana, and now we are two men, full of our bodies and winter and the half-jesting mockery of women, and now it is I, father, who am an older man, and, like all men raging to repeat themselves, shimmy only half-blissed toward my own bettering, as I brush the snow from this fatherless boy, all laughter now, who must issue nearly alone into the half-lit, half-darkening world of his own manhood, and then we are done eating, and a white sootfall of flakes begins again, and I say: *On doit retourner. Les autres attendant*, and we start back down the hill, along the river's trickling glassflow, where I show him *les feuilles mortes de l'année passée*, and then I am thinking, again, of you, with whom I could never have done this, and, next thing I know, we arrive, in the brilliant, January light, at the waiting arms of his mother, and my wife, and he looks back, this boy who is now leading me out of the woods, and cries out: *Nous arrivons!* And I half-weep my way into their arms, these beautiful women, pushing one foot in front of the other, planting my poles like canes, loving what little I can, turning my face toward the sun, correcting the world.

Michael Blumenthal

respect. (Sam's wife, Eva, played by Joan Plowright, monopolizes the young people's resentment, leaving her husband free to be the genial, easygoing one.) Still, Sam fades in importance as if through natural processes, like a poorly fixed photograph, until we see him at the end in a nursing home. That's when the grandson's consciousness, which had been implicitly governing the film, comes to the fore. The opening images return; only this time, the voiceover comes from Michael, repeating Sam's words but lending a much different tone to this recollection of America's false beauty.

Now, audiences will usually sit still for a film about ordinary people, so long as it tells them that life is good; but it's an act of almost insane daring to make such a movie and end it on a note of disillusionment and loss. For that reason alone, I respect *Avalon*—though not half as much as Levinson does. Every shot in it seems to be an advertisement for the filmmaker's integrity. There's even a moment when young Michael gets a long, meaningful glimpse of a diner. I'm very worried. If Levinson keeps this up, he might fall into Auteurist Hell with Coppola. The signs are already there, in a series of lightweight performances he wouldn't have tolerated in his earlier pictures.

And yet, for all that, I confess I ate up *Avalon*. Maybe that means I'm a sucker for loss and disillusionment; maybe I just wanted to hear the *shtetl*-to-suburb story for the thousand and first time. For whatever reason, the posturing and solemnity of *Avalon* mattered less to me than the feeling, sequence by sequence, that life was evanescent on the screen. I recommend *Avalon*—and a good dose of patience.

Perhaps you've seen the magazine ads for a perfume called Anaïs Anaïs. They show a couple of pastel-tinted young women with doxy expressions, their unbelievably fragile features dissolving into the gauzy atmosphere. That's what Philip Kaufman's *Henry and June* looks like.

It's the story of Anaïs Nin and her love affairs with Henry Miller and his wife, June. For people who think Nin and Miller were two of the silliest humans ever to draw breath, the movie will seem startlingly true to life. For people whose hunger for inadvertent humor is quickly sated, *Henry and June* will seem endless.

I eagerly await *Henry and June II*, in which Damien is born and kills everybody. □

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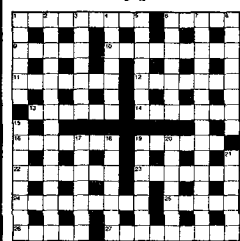
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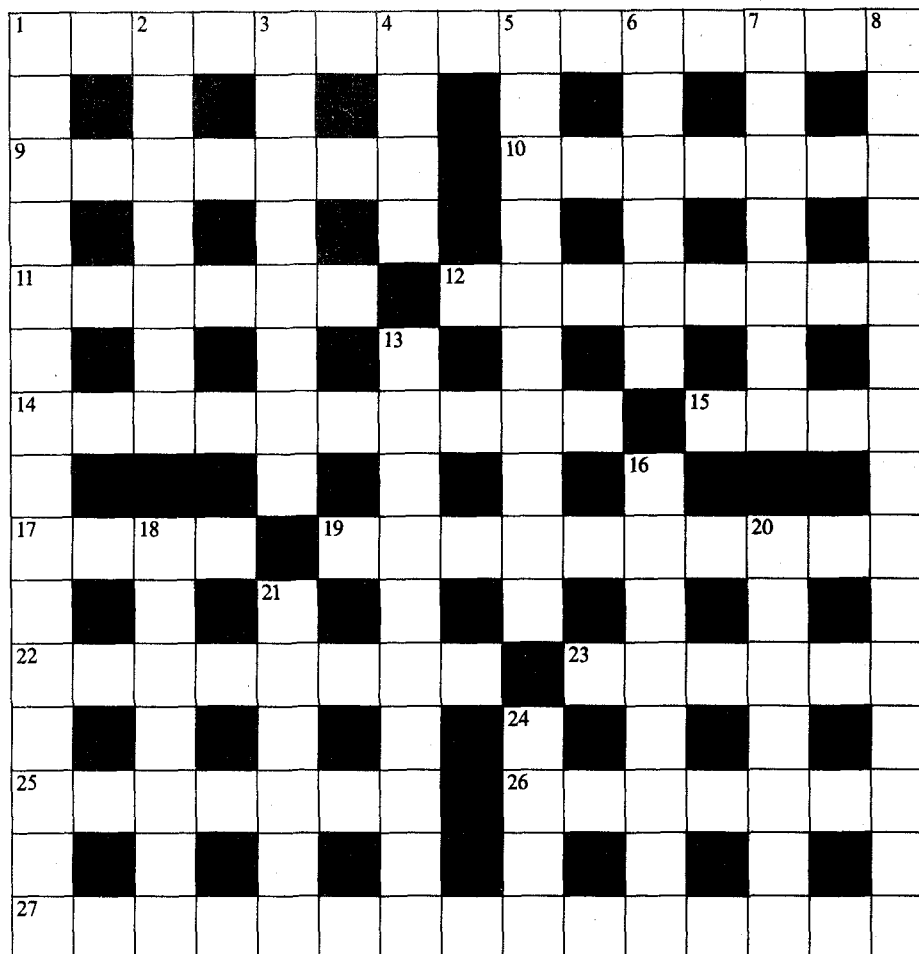
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SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 2309



Crossword Puzzle No. 2310

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

- 1 It goes up, down and around. (You may find it useful to do so, too.) (6,9)
- 9 You'll find "O" under a different verse form. (7)
- 10 A carpenter might use what some women consider superficial digital enhancement. (4,3)
- 11 One might have a hunch this way it's a back formation! (There's a unit of change on it!) (6)
- 12 Looking for the station, and endeavoring to be with it. (6,2)
- 14 The science of water in motion could make us rich, lady! (10)
- 15 and 17 See 3 down
- 19 Even villas might be poorly constructed in this city! (10)
- 22 Do they make pronouncements on counterfeits? (8)
- 23 Perhaps useful in the kitchen, though it sounds as though it should be larger. (6)

- 25 What's the point in animal control having streaks? (7)
- 26 Ruth was so affectionately called a little one overseas. (7)
- 27 Sounds like Sir Galahad pursuing Sir Modred time and time again! (5,5,5)

DOWN

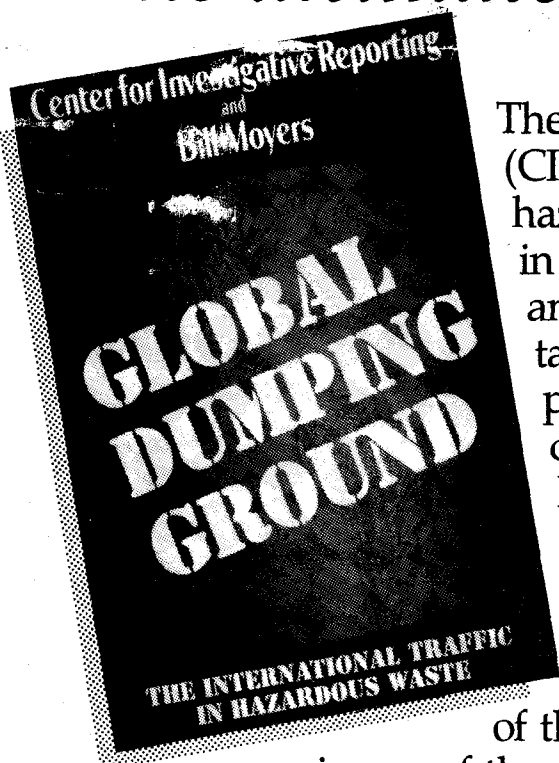
- 1 The royal family was certainly not bent on getting something to drink! (8,7)
- 2 Obviously dieting is wrong if you get lit! (7)
- 3 and 17 across A musical one in Paris sounds like Dagwood attire and one who loves has things coming out even. (One of them rose, at least!) (8,8)
- 4 Rolls up, perhaps, with a social rejection. (4)
- 5 Making a statement of what the anchor might have been doing at one time? (10)
- 6 Almost getting something up like one of the California show-offs? (6)
- 7 The age is as different as the point of warfare in Africa at one time. (7)
- 8 What one is told to do if extremely envious? (You might to an artichoke!) (3,4,5,3)
- 13 Only one variety might be considered lucky enough to take off the highway. (10)
- 16 Only half the population might be represented in play that suggests morality. (8)
- 18 Putting up with a bad agent in this? (7)
- 20 The French object of thin strips of wood! (7)
- 21 and 24 It might be meritorious to give proper respect to what one hears of the first murder victim! (10)

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SOLUTION AT LEFT

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